

LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
HARI SINGH NALWA
Marshal of the Khalsa

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FOREWORD

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, the Marshal of the Khalsa rendered glorious service towards extending the limits of the kingdom of Lahore from 1811 to 1837 upto the natural boundaries of the Punjab and went to the extent of sacrificing his life for this patriotic mission.

The map of the Punjab during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh depicts that sealing of the North-West Frontier border by the great Sardar is a unique act having international legacy. It was the first time after Anangpal in eight hundred years that the series of invasions from the North-West were checked, the border sealed and the tribes men ruled.

Indeed Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was an astute statesman, a dashing general and a most capable administrator.

It was my long cherished desire to arrange to bring to lime light the indispensable contribution of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa for the cause of the mother country. With this burning desire in mind, we thought of giving an incentive to writers on the eve of his bicentenary birth celebrations who could endeavour to delineate in proper historical perspective the glitter that came in the way of this great General. I am feeling immense pleasure in presenting before the readers this treatise on the life and achievements of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.

Gurcharan Singh Tohra

January 13, 1993

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Hardas Singh

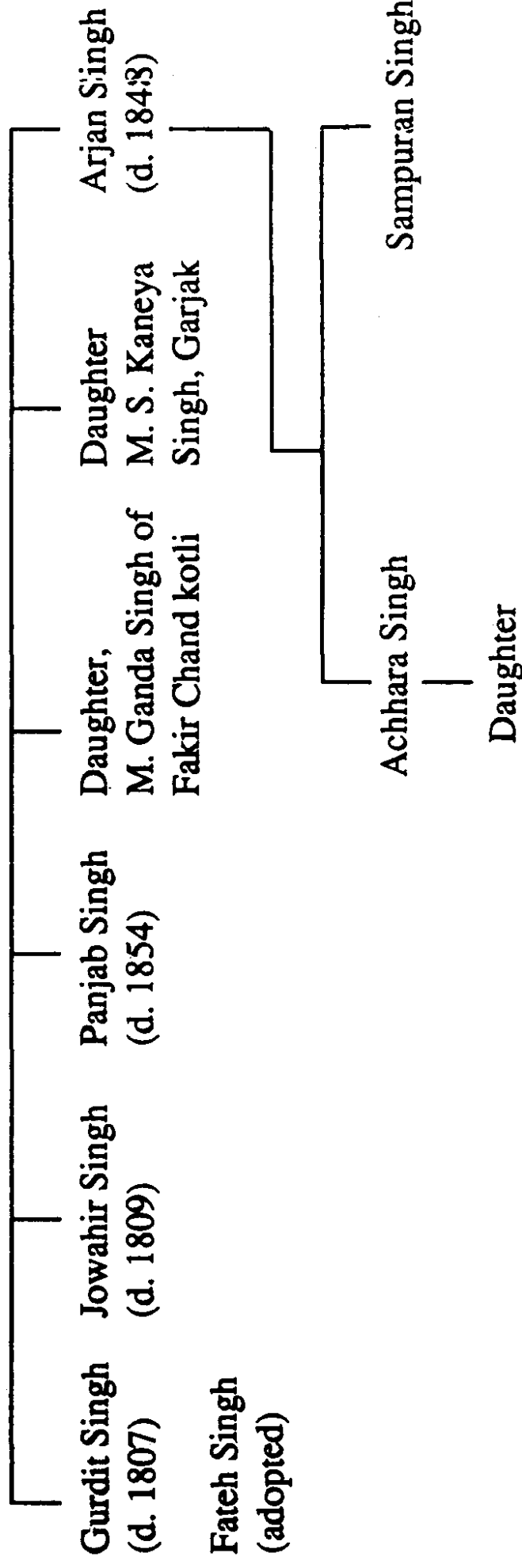
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Gurdyal Singh

(d. 1798)

Sardar Hari Singh

(d. 1837)



Lepel H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1865.

CHAPTER - I**IMPRIMIS:**

**MUSLIM RULE IN INDIA AND NORTH-
WEST FRONTIER PROVINCES**

How the vast Muslim Empire on Indian soil disappeared in Kasur, Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar is a subject closely associated with the campaigns of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, the Marshal of the Khalsa and terror for the Afghans. Being the 'Murat of the Khalsa' as he was appropriately called by Sir Henry Griffin, the famous British dignitary and a prominent writer of significant treatise on the Sikhs, his name figures among those patriots who participated bravely rather passionately in almost all the battles fought constantly against the Afghans during the Sikh rule under Maharaja Ranjit Singh for a period of three decades from A. D. 1807 to A. D. 1837. Before we study this phenomenon and the contribution of Sardar Hari Singh for the extinction of Afghan rule from the North-West Frontier Provinces, it is imperative to recapitulate, by way of giving a profile, the different stages of Muslim domination in India.

The rise of Islam synchronises with the birth of Muhammad Sahib, its founder prophet in A. D. 570 at Mecca in Arabia. Islam which had spread in almost whole of Arabia during the life time of the prophet made very rapid progress after his demise in A. D. 632. It remarkably influenced many a countries of the world more especially Central Asia under the Caliphs of Omayyid and Abbasid dynasties from A. D. 632 to A. D. 1246. Immediately after the death of Prophet Muhammad, Caliphs of Omayyid dynasty, more especially the first four namely Abu Bakar, Omar, Osman and Ali dominated the Islamic territories. The Muslims under the Caliphs conquered areas in the East upto Afganistan, Egypt, Africa, Herat, Ghazni, Kabul, Balkh etc. The last Caliph of Omayyids was murdered in A. D. 749 giving place to Abbasid Caliphs from A. D. 749 to A. D. 1256. With the change of capital from Damascus to Baghdad during the regime of Omayyids when Islamic arms penetrated into central Asia they gradually founded a number of administrative institutions in order to consolidate the conquests so made.

The rise of Abbasid dynasty of Caliphs witnessed the dominance of Persian influence instead of that of the Arabs and emergence of Baghdad as a centre of learning and literature particularly during the period A. D. 786 to 809 when Islam under Caliph Harun Rashid was at the peak of its glory. Another feature of development of Islam under Abbasid dynasty was the recruitment of Turks in the army who gained so much influence and strength with the passage of time that by the end of the eleventh century they reigned supreme. It was in A. D. 1256 that Caliph Abu Mastan was killed by Halaku, the grandson of Chingiz Khan and the rule of Caliphs of Baghdad ceased to exist. It is beyond any doubt that under the Abbasid Caliphs, Islam earned a name and spreaded far and wide in Central Asia, Africa and Europe. Albeit, later developments took such a distinguished and noteworthy step as amazed the whole world. The Turks made such overwhelming efforts for the spread of Islam that they earned the sole credit of propagating this prominent religion of the world.

Much before the Arabs succeeded in conquering Sind in A. D. 712, huge number of Muslims came to India for the purpose of trading and preaching their faith. Resultantly, they became centre of attraction for some Indians of neglected caste hierarchy. As a matter of fact, Islam reached every corner of the world due to constant efforts made by the trading and enthusiastic preachers. The Arabs, as is quite evident from the pages of history, remained unsuccessful in consolidating their conquests and establishing a permanent kingdom. Stanley Lane-poole comments that the Arabs had conquered Sind, but the conquest was only an episode in the history of India and of Islam. It was a triumph without result. However, the fact remains that Muslim rule was established as a consequence of the repeated invasions of Mahmud of Ghazana and Muhammad Ghorī. Subsequently, Islam made its place in many a heart in India due to a number of logical and eventful causes. The contemporary Indian society adhered to caste system and resorted to discrimination of men and women. Besides the society being caste ridden, the worship of multifarious gods in Indian society had made confusion worth confounded and those who belonged to low caste strata satisfied their craving of getting rid of rotten atmosphere by embracing Islam where doctrines of universal equality and fatherhood of mankind captivated them. Absence of any intellectual demand from the believers of Islam and its spread over vast territories went a long way in winning converts.

Nevertheless, the Turks were responsible for conquering India and establishing a permanent rule. The policy which they conceived and executed for spreading their faith was aggressive one. The invasions of early Turks of India like Alaptigin and Subuktigin etc. etc. contributed considerably towards discovering valuable routes for the Muslims to the significant fertile Indian plains. Of course, these early invasions of the Turks proved futile in conquering the Indian soil. Mahmud of Ghazana attacked India for seventeen times. Besides the political motives he had in view, his major target was amassing of Indian wealth as India was then popularly known as 'golden sparrow'. Besides, spread of Islam was another pertinent motive he had in view though to a much less degree. Alberuni, a famous and erudite historian, a scholar of Sanskrit and philosopher arrived in India in the war terrain of Mahmud of Ghazana. Commenting about the invasions of Mahmud, he argues that these frequent invasions absolutely ruined the prosperity of India. Majumdar is right when he states that the main objective of his eastern expeditions seems to have been the acquisition of riches of India and the destruction of the morale of its custodians. This was the longing he cherished throughout his long career of conquests of the alien lands.

However, Muhammad Ghori had a definite aim of the conquest of Indian soil. Stanley Lane-poole argues that of the two tides of Muhammedan invasions that surged into India, Mahmud had left little impact. The dominion he had conquered in India was consolidated under other rulers and from the days of Muhammad Ghori to the catastrophe of the Indian Mutiny there was always a Muhammedan king upon the throne of Delhi. Lane-poole's remarks indeed, stand the testimony of history that from the days of Muhammad Ghori to the so called mutiny of 1857, there had always been a Muhammedan king upon the throne of Delhi. It is a fact beyond any doubt that the Muslim kingdom established by Muhammad Ghori remained in existence from 12th century A. D. to the middle of 19th century A. D. Lane-poole writes elsewhere that the Muslims inspired by the spirit of adventure of militant propaganda of spreading the kingdom of God upon earth, as well as ceasing faith in the gods of this world had every advantage over the native Hindus.

Muhammad Ghori's death witnessed the commencement of the rule of slave dynasty from A. D. 1206 to A. D. 1290. They were, of

course, slaves or the descendants of the slave kings and ruled for a long period of 84 years. Only a few significant rulers of this dynasty figure in the pages of history. They include Kutb-ud-Din-Aybek, Altutmish, Raziya Begum etc. while others like Azam Shah, Behram Shah, Masud etc. were nominal kings.

It is quite in the fitness of things to point out here that it was, in fact, during the rule of the slave kings that the real foundation of Muslim rule in India was laid. As a matter of fact, slave kings like Altutmish and Balban set the fixing up of deep roots of Muslims in India by consolidating the conquests. After the demise of Balban, we virtually see the rise of Khilji dynasty on the political scene of India. Ala-ud-Din Khilji's rule which lasted for 20 long years from A. D. 1296 to A. D. 1316 witnessed despotism and that too in its very heights. During his reign increased the boundaries of the Muslim kingdom and the Muslim rulers firmly rooted and consolidated themselves.

The death knell of the Khilji dynasty was sounded by the Tughlak kings who ruled India from A. D. 1320 to A. D. 1412 for a period of 92 years. Their ultimate failure lay in the basic fact that they neglected the Hindus who were a majority of the whole population. They failed to found a national government based on the feelings of patriotism and nationalism.

The Sayyids ruled over India from A. D. 1414 to A. D. 1451. The founder of this dynasty Sayyid Khizar Khan was the Viceroy of Timur in India. Four rulers of this dynasty ruled over India for thirty seven years:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Khizar Khan | A. D. 1414 - A. D. 1421 |
| Mubarak | A. D. 1421 - A. D. 1433 |
| Muhammad Shah | A. D. 1433 - A. D. 1443 |
| Ala-ud-Din Alam Shah | A. D. 1443 - A. D. 1451 |

The last ruler of this dynasty who sat on the Delhi throne by means of the consensus of the Amirs of the court proved to be hopeless as he took no pains towards the affairs of the kingdom. As a result of chaos and confusion, Bahlol Lodhi, the Punjab Governor made an attack on Delhi. As such, the Sayyid kings disappeared from the scene. He later

on handed over the Delhi kingdom to Bahlol Lodhi by his own discretion.

The downfall of the Sayyids brought the Lodhi's to significance who ruled over India for 75 long years from A. D. 1451 to A. D. 1526.

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Bahlol Lodhi | A. D. 1451 - A. D. 1488 |
| Sikandar Lodhi | A. D. 1488 - A. D. 1518 |
| Ibrahim Lodhi | A. D. 1518 - A. D. 1526 |

The last Lodhi king suffered defeat from the hands of Babar in the battle of Panipat in 1526. The Lodhis, it goes without saying, were not successful in building up a stable political structure of government.

Social fabric of society under Delhi Sultanate consisted of two Major communities — The Muslims and the Hindus. Muslims were indeed, the favourite children of the rulers and enjoyed various privileges. The state took keen interest in looking after their religious and educational requirements. It was their privilege to obtain all the lucrative posts of the Government and were free from various taxes. Mosques were frequently got constructed for offering prayers.

Hindus paid *jizia* whereas Muslims were exempted from this tax. As a matter of fact, the burden of paying taxes hanged heavy upon the Hindu population throughout the Sultanate period of Indian history. They were virtually deprived of all the facilities which included religious and educational needs. Whereas they were denied high government jobs, no educational facility existed for the upkeep of their children. Freedom of conscience was not allowed to them. Construction of new temples was discouraged and the old ones were often replaced by mosques. This sometimes led to conversions of low strata of Hindus to Islam. Some rulers like Firoz Shah themselves put in deliberate efforts for this conversion. Anyhow, the impact of Bhakti movement went a long way in easing the fanatical situation and made the two communities close to each other.

Notwithstanding the above description, it is quite appropriate to point out on the basis of recent researches made on the character and structure of the Turkish Empire in northern India that after the Ghoriid occupation of Northern India the Hindu religion adapted itself to the circumstances and being a dynamic religion relaxed its rigidity towards

caste structure of the society in the coming centuries which attitude resulted in facility attained in the use of proselytizing ways and means. We thus see remarkable changes in the nature and character of this religion in the 12th and 15th century.

Khaliq Ahmad Nizami in his 'Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century' has made a correct estimate of the character of the early Turkish Empire.

The early Turkish Empire of Hindustan was a class state in so far as its political outlook was concerned. The Turkish warriors were more anxious to consolidate and preserve their power and authority rather than attempt any propagation or exposition of the political ideals of Islam. In fact, they themselves were callow converts and had accepted the new religion at time when decadence had set in and political rivalries and ambitions had deadened the real spirit of the faith. They were ignorant of the Islamic ideals of peace and war which had inspired the soul of the early Saracens. Their wars were not the wars of religion and their political ideals were not determined by Islam. They planned their political life on secular basis; worked according to their secular instincts and allowed the spirit of tribal intolerance and tribal greed which Istawa, as preached by the Prophet, had come to abolish or to continue operating in their lives. They were Muslims no doubt but were not the representatives of Islam. The chronicles of the early Muslim historians like Sadr-ud-Din Hasan Nizami and Fakhr-i-Mudabbir often delude us into thinking that the Turkish occupation of Northern India was a religious affair and that the warriors were religious heroes ready to live and die for the faith, but such a view cannot stand the test of historical scrutiny.

The Mughals prevailed upon the Indian political scene after the victory of Babar in the battle field of Panipat in A. D. 1526. On the eve of Babar's invasion of India the whole fabric and structure of the Governmental machinery had been deteriorated due to the constant invasions of Mughals for three centuries. As regards the origin of the Mughals, Lane-poole states, "The beload of two Scourages of Asia, Mongol and Turk, Changiz and Timur, mixed in his (Babur's) veins."

The reign of Mughals witnessed a lot of change in the religious outlook of the rulers. But the fact remains that the Mughal rulers followed independent religious policy which more or less depended on

the personal nature of the king. We may have a glance at such individual behaviour of the rulers. Babur called his war against the Hindus as *jehad* or religious wars. Humayun gave fights to the Rajput rulers of Chitor out of purely religious considerations. Credit, however, goes to Akbar who granted religious liberty to his subjects irrespective of their religion. Hindus were appointed on high posts on pure merit. Religious intolerance was given no place in the structure of the society. *Jizia* was abolished. Matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs also helped in making religious tolerance felt all over. The overall impact of these measures was that Hindus and Rajputs became sincere and faithful subjects of the State. Emperors Jahangir and Shahjahan by reverting this policy again lost that regard in the hearts of the Hindu population which Akbar had very judiciously been able to create. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev during the reign of Jahangir and battles of Guru Hargobind during the rule of Shahjahan are evident proofs of the bigotry of the Mughal rulers.

History of Aurangzeb's policy of religious intolerance and the subsequent reaction in terms of disturbance and revolts throughout the empire is very touchy indeed. Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs sacrificed his life at the altar of the faith which depicts how fanatic Emperor Aurangzeb was. He was the monarch who fully resolved to eliminate Hinduism from his Empire. As a matter of fact, by putting the adherents of every faith besides the Sunni Muslims in a tight corner and by using inhuman ways and means to convert the people to his own faith, he virtually brought the ruin of his Empire. Bleeding pages of history tell this tale of agony and woe even to this day. Albeit, Emperor Aurangzeb failed miserably in his objective to represent a purely Muslim State. The Rajputs, the Sikhs, the Marathas etc. rose in revolt smashing the inner fabric of the Empire and making the confusion worst confounded.

The degradation of the fanatical Muslim rule under Emperor Aurangzeb thus, began during his regime and after the end of this shaking and deteriorating Empire during the suzerainty of the later Mughals, the Sikhs firstly under the Misl rule and secondly under Maharaja Ranjit Singh dominated over the Punjab where the Mughals and Afghans had made constant and crucial attempts to trample them under foot and destroy them root and branch. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was destined to establish his benevolent rule in the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. The sealing of this border of North West Frontier was a miracle indeed brought about by his sardars like General Hari Singh Nalwa.

North West Frontier Policy of General Hari Singh Nalwa's Mentor, The Maharaja:

The mountainous region situated between Afghanistan and India popularly called North-West Frontier Provinces always remained a problem for the government of India because of the simple reason that it was the main entrance of foreign traders in India, central Asia or the Persain invaders who came through Kabul down to India by this route. The North-West Frontier was inhabited by barbarous tribes. They were not sensitive to any law and order situation and wanted to remain supreme in their region. Their own fraternity was dear to them but at home no civilized government was tolerated by them. They were of course, proud of facing any great power for securing their hearths and the homes. Sultans of Delhi and Mughals like any other of their predecessor power were interested to control these unruly tribes of the North-West Frontier Provinces who remained a serious problem. In their bid to check these outrageous and riotous tribes and to secure their territory the Mughals had to make strenuous efforts and resultantly had to indulge in frequent warfare even at the cost of their own empire of India. It is pertinent to point out here that the Sultanate of Delhi, the Mughals, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and even the British empire afterwards had to face this greivous problem of the frontier tribes.

The military system of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was based on some imperative considerations namely the strength of the opponents, weapons of warfare and advances made in weaponry, the geographical position and the political relationship in the given contest.

As a matter of fact, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's North-West Frontier policy is based on given factors and considerations; rather it owes its origin to the Treaty of Amritsar and the events pertaining to subsequent decade. The treaty which was concluded between the Maharaja and the British virtually stopped the scope of East-West expansion for the Maharaja beyond the Sutlej and the concentration was naturally diverted towards westward and southward territories. The developments which took place on the eastern border of the kingdom of the Maharaja coincided with very significant events in Afghanistan. A particular situation arose in Afghanistan when the long standing civil war in the country came to an end. Wazir Fateh Khan Barakzai took the cause of Shah Mahmud and desposed the reigning monarch Shah Shuja. After

consolidating his position at home the Wazir kept in view the conquest of Peshawar, Attock, Derajat, Multan and Kashmir which had been a part of Afghanistan sometime back. Moreover, this adventure had become more or less a necessity for the Wazir and his suzerain because the ruling authority of these places was against the Barkzais. Moreover, Shah Shuja after his expulsion had sought resort in this region. Such circumstances were favourable to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This region was nominally under the control of Kabul Government though not under a strict domination and extended invitation to the monarchs of Kabul to invade India which state of events were very dangerous for Maharaja Ranjit Singh who looked upon the territories of West Punjab upto the Indus as a natural preserve for himself where he could have a free hand in acquisition. Moreover, the Maharaja was anxious to secure his control and prevent foreign attacks from the North-West. The scaling of the North-West was a dire necessity for the Maharaja for the mere survival of his infant kingdom.

North-West Frontier problem has been very chronic as the invaders invading the Punjab and India through the rivers situated in this region and the tribes inhabiting the region situated in between the hilly areas between Sind and Kabul generally resorted to loot and destructive activities because of scanty sources of livelihood at their disposal. Those inhabitants of the frontier did not like to be governed by any authority. Broadly speaking, historians and writers have traced the problem of the North-West Frontier Provinces from certain distinct angles namely the international problem of Indo-Afghan relationship, the problem of subjugating the Frontier, the problem of defence of army posted at the frontier, and the problem of administration of this region. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also showed sensitiveness to this problem after his acquisition of a large part of the mid-Punjab.

In order to solve this problem the Maharaja was supported by various ways and means which included his friendship with the British on account of the concluding of the territory of Amritsar in 1809. The conclusion of the treaty gave a green signal to the Maharaja in the East. He could now most conveniently use his force to solve the problem of the N.W.F.P. Moreover, the Maharaja was then in a convenient position on account of the internal strife and disturbances in Afghanistan which may more appropriately be called a situation of Civil War. The Maharaja

also enjoyed the facility of getting all possible assistance from all quarters including his own army, his relations, allies and the subjugated chieftains who were at that time either his *jagidars* or in a way at his beck and call. The civil war in Afghanistan had made it impossible for the Government of Afghanistan to properly administer the areas situated in the North-West of the Punjab.

Whereas the Maharaja had to face the fanatical element in solving the N.W.F.P. problem in the shape and form of Afghan tribes who fought with religious zeal and rigidity and declared *jehad* against the forces of the Maharaja, he had the privilege of using the Akalis against the enemies who were proud of their prowess of arms and were extraordinary helpful to him. Another factor which assisted the Maharaja in giving a tough fight to the Afghans was that he had the sagacity of training his troops on western lines before using the armed forces against the formidable foe of the Frontier. The European experts like General Court, Allard and Ventura took great pains in training the army of the Maharaja on western lines. Nevertheless, barbarous Afghan tribes though well versed in the act of warfare prevalent in those days had no match with the army of the Maharaja.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh adopted the policy of subjugating the smaller powers at the first instance. He then conquered the bigger formidable foes and showed reluctance in annexing their territories at the first stage for the simple reason that he knew it well that it was beyond his capacity to rule those regions effectively with a remote control method. Resultantly, after consolidating his position at home he annexed the country of the formidable enemies from whom he first satisfied himself by obtaining *nazrana*. The Maharaja achieved victory over Attock in A. D. 1813, Multan in A. D. 1818 and Kashmir in A. D. 1819. He later on preferred to conquer areas beyond Sind. He conquered Dera Ghazi Khan in A. D. 1820, Mankera and Dera Ismail Khan in A.D. 1821, received *nazrana* from Afghan ruler in Peshawar and appointed Jahandad Khan, an Afghan as an administrator of the place. The Maharaja also received *nazrana* from Yar Mohammad Khan who acknowledged the authority of the Maharaja and expelled Jahandad Khan from the territory of Peshawar with the force of arms. In 1823, the Maharaja defeated Wazir Azim Khan of Kabul in the battle of Naushera which was handed over again to Yar Muhammad Khan in lieu of *nazrana*.

Even on the demise of Yar Muhammad, the Maharaja did not consider it wise to annex Peshawar at the first instance as he did not deem his position consolidated at home. Consequently his brother was acknowledged as the administrator of Peshawar and *nazrana* was continued to be duly received from there.

The Maharaja thus, successfully used the Afghans in his favour by accepting them as administrators of the place for a number of years during which period he strengthened his sources and also was able to use the adversaries against themselves. The Afghan governors of Peshawar and certain other places, could not strengthen the hands of the government of Kabul on account of constant strife and friction.

The direct rule of the Khalsa extended to the N.W.F.P. after a patient waiting for a number of years. Dera Ghazi Khan was annexed to Lahore kingdom in A. D. 1831, Peshawar in A. D. 1834, Tank, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan etc. were annexed during the years 1832-36.

The troublesome and outlawed tribes of Usafzai, Afridi, Muhammadzai etc. inhabiting Derajat, Hazara, Bannu, and Peshawar, region were brought under the grip of a strict government by taking stern measures against them and by sending efficient and sagacious administrators to this region for their subjugation. Those administrators include General Hari Singh Nalwa, Budh Singh, Dewan Ram Dayal, Amar Singh Kalan, Ventura etc.

In 1827, General Hari Singh Nalwa along with his companion Sardars very confidently won victory over thousands of Pathans of the above mentioned territories in the battle of Saidu when they gathered together under the flag of one Sayed Ahmad Bareilvi who was popularly known in the region as the messenger of prophet Muhammad and declared *jehad* against the Sikhs. Sayed Ahmad, however, did not restrain his activities of loot and plunder in the region and was ultimately given a crushing defeat by Prince Sher Singh in A. D. 1831 in the battle of Bala Kot. The Sayed was killed fighting with his followers.

The Kabailies, however continued their activities of warfare against the Sikhs. General Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed as Governor of Peshawar after attaining victory of that region who constantly applied his sources to crush the Afghan power in the region, of course, by using harsh measures which the exigency of the time demanded. It may be noted that the Maharaja used the same sagacious policy against the Afghans after annexing the territory across the Indus which was

subsequently adpted by the British. This policy of warfare applied by the Maharaja to the frontier Afghan tribes is popularly known as the policy of guerrilla warfare which implied attack by the enemy first and then to retreat. It is quite in the fitness of things to explain here that before the regime established by the Maharaja, this policy of warfare was successfully applied by the Misl Sardars and was known as a policy of *dhai pat* or guerrilla warfare i.e. attacking of the enemy was considered as one step and to come back to the place of safety was taken as the second one; attacking of the foe was considered only a half step.

In order to save the Punjab from the nuisance of Afghan invasions, to widen the frontier passages for the marching of the Sikh troops, to restrain the turbulent tribes from aggressive designs and to create awe in their hearts, the Maharaja made elaborate defence arrangements for his armed forces.

The defence system of the Maharaja in the frontier territory was based on the acquisition of significant areas and building of new fortifications and repairing of the already existing forts. Thus, the Maharaja's main stress in the frontier was to guard against eventualities caused by Afghan invasions and to defend the kingdom from tribal onslaughts. This involved the efficient use of military force, effective occupation of strategic positions and the use of astute diplomatic measures.

It is thus, to be pointed out here that the sole purpose of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's administrative measures in the N.W.F.P. at the first instance was to create peace and subsequently to annex the province when his power was strengthened. The Maharaja for the purpose had sometimes to take resort in hard measures without which no alternative was left. As the creation of peace and law and order situation was a pre-requisite to the collection of revenue, stress was given in creating peaceful conditions but such efforts did not always meet complete success and the revenue as such could not be uniformly fixed by the Maharaja. The governors appointed to administer territories across the Indus had to keep a good number of soldiers. Resultantly, the Maharaja's gains towards revenue collection did not figure much in the income of the kingdom from this source.

The local chiefs of N.W.F.P. however, enjoyed plenty of

discretionary power. The *nazims* and *kardars* had scanty of interference in their administrative affairs. The *maliks* were the chiefs of their tribes and collected revenue from their own tribes, settled their personal disputes and inflicted punishments to the offenders. Notwithstanding all this, they had to acknowledge the over all supremacy of the suzerain of Lahore.

We may add here that besides the pressure on the Maharaja by the Lahore Chiefs to annex Afghanistan to the Lahore kingdom, the Maharaja did not take any solid step in this direction. A popular dialogue between the Maharaja and General Hari Singh Nalwa elaborates this point. The saying goes that immediately after the conquest of Attock by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he was present at Attock along with some other Sardars. He asked Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa how far was Peshawar from that place ? The Nalwa Sardar said that it was only at ten furlong's distance. The Maharaja made a query as to how long was a furlong ? The Sardar who was very quick witted replied that it was very short in the Punjab but long in Afghanistan. The Maharaja further quothed whether they were in Afghanistan or in the Punjab. The witty Sardar again replied that wherever his excellency set his feet, it was Punjab. The saying clearly depicts how much interested chiefs like Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa were for the conquest of the frontier provinces and Afghanistan. Albeit, the Maharaja inspite of this, restrained his activities so much so that he did not take solid steps towards annexing Afghanistan to his Empire. The involvement of Maharaja in the Tripartite Treaty of 1838 was a very sagacious step taken by him to safeguard his interests.

It was on account of this policy that the Frontier Provinces of the Punjab under the Sikh rule had no danger to face throughout the extense of the Empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The North-West Frontier was altogether sealed by the brave generals like Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and there was positively no danger left from the Afghan menace in the frontier strip.

Before summing up our debate on the issue, we may point out here more vividly that consolidation of North-Western Frontier by Maharaja Ranjit Singh changed the global map itself. But for this significant contribution of the Maharaja and his General Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa this region would have been a part and parcel of the Afghan Empire. As a matter of fact, Ahmad Shah Durrani had brought under sway the trans-

Indus territory including a part of West Punjab which stimulated the rise of the Sikhs against him. Qazi Nur Mohammad who had accompanied the Durrani invader during his seventh invasion has taken note of the territory under the prospective Misl chiefs but the credit for restoring the cis-Indus and trans-Indus tribes goes to Hari Singh Nalwa and his mentor, the astute Maharaja who in the preliminary state contented himself with conquering of the North-Western region. Albeit, as N.K. Sinha points out 'the mere warrior within him never got the better of the statesman'.

The Maharaja, as the exigency of the time demanded, besides a network of defensive measures taken in the frontier, organised mobile military columns to suppress the aggressive tribes wherever and whenever the need arose in the frontier. The building of forts assisted him considerably in taking of defensive measures in the frontier vis-a-vis the construction of a fort at Jamrud by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and building of other forts like those of Jahangira, Peshawar, Kherabad etc. got built by Lahore suzerain put the opponents in dismay.

Thus, by way of imprim is, we may say with certainty that the suzerain of Lahore, the mighty and shrewd Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a full grasp of the whole situation he faced and by means of adopting meticulous devices vis-a-vis maintenance of internal law and order, putting of strong defence against the possible invasions from the side of Afghanistan, adopting appropriate measures against the incursions of hilly Afghan tribes, making sound arrangements for the realisation of tribute, and appointing trained European generals alongwith his own army trained on the pattern of the west, the Afghan invasions were not only put to an end and the doors closely shut, the baffling problem was overcome by means of conquering the North-West territories and by finding scientific and natural frontier.

CHAPTER - II

CAREER AND MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS - I

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, the typical product of his age was born at Gujranwala now in the West Pakistan in A. D. 1791 in Uppal Khatri family in the house of Sardar Gurdial Singh to Dharam Kaur. He was the only son of his parents. The ancestors of the Nalwa Sardar were originally the residents of Majitha town situated in the vicinity of Amritsar. His grandfather Sardar Hardas Singh engaged in the service of Sukarchakia Misl was killed in an expedition undertaken by the Misl in A. D. 1762. Gurdial Singh, the father of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa followed the profession of his father and took part in various campaigns of Sukarachakia Sardars — Charat Singh and Mahan Singh in the capacity of a *deradar*.¹ He was a recipient of a small estate. He expired in A. D. 1798 when Sardar Hari Singh was only seven years of age and was thus looked after with care and caution by his maternal uncle who took him to his house. In those days of political instability and warfare not much attention was diverted towards the education of children. Training in the feats of war was deemed necessary and physical education attracted much attention. Accordingly, Hari Singh who was physically quite stout and strong and impressive too in appearance when grew up, learnt the art of warfare. He acquired expertise in wielding bow, arrow, sword and gun which art and skill stood him by good stead later on. It is said that he was indefatigable and could sit on horse back for long hours. The training he thus attained seems to be more or less informal² because of his disturbed family circumstances in view of which formal training and attainments were difficult rather impossible.

Notwithstanding the limitations, Hari Singh must have received his preliminary education in languages like Gurmukhi, Urdu, Persain³ efficiency in which was developed by him in the later part of his career to the extent that Baron Charles Hugel was all praise for his attainments when he met the former during his travels in the Punjab during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Hugel states that Hari Singh, besides his general knowledge about the statistics of many of the European states, was well versed in Persain.⁴ He impressed him extremely with his overall achievements. He was the

person later on chosen by Maharaja Ranjit Singh for inviting Lord William Bentinck at Shimla⁵ in 1831 to talk to and consult the Maharaja on some political issues. In the words of Hugel⁶;

Hari Singh Nalwa was the person sent by Ranjit Singh to invite Lord William Bentinck to confer with the Maharaja at Simla; and as I happened to know most of the persons he had met there, our conversation was very different from the majority of such interviews in India; and really consisted of a due exchange of ideas, and of references to events which had actually taken place. His questions proved him to have thought and reasoned justly: he is well informed on the statistics of many of the European States, and on the policy of the East India Company, and what is very rare among the Sikhs; he can both read and write the Persian language.

He was administered *Pahul* when grew up⁷ and assumed the responsibility of supervising the affairs of his father's *jagir*. There is a divergence of opinion regarding his joining of service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Some hold that Hari Singh presented himself before the Maharaja in his open *darbar* which he used to hold for a week or so on the eve of Basant fair every year. The Maharaja was so much impressed by the feats of chivalry shown by him that he was taken in the royal service as a personal *khidmatgar*⁸ or an attendant. Another version is that Hari Singh was sent by his mother to the *darbar* of the Maharaja in connection with an appeal to be made before his Majesty for the favourable settlement of a property dispute.⁹ Hari Singh is stated to have won applause of his royal master by ways and means more than one. Resultantly, the Maharaja 'always desirous of encouraging bravery and soldier like conduct observing Hari Singh to be a very bold and active man, and that on many occasions he had evinced an enterprising disposition began to raise him in his favour.'¹⁰ Accordingly, as stated by Diwan Amar Nath, he was commissioned by the Maharaja in 1804¹¹ by granting him a command of 700 footmen and horses with the honour of

Sardar.¹²

It was from this period of the commencement of his military career that Hari Singh came to be known with the appellation of Nalwa.¹³ Writers differ with regard to the reasons and there are two significant versions: first that he was by nature very generous and used to distribute alms lavishly to the poor and the needy which reminded the people of the generosity of legendary king Nal of the ancient period. His title connects him with the warrior king Nal of ancient India. Second, he came to be known by the said title by way of an incident which took place during the early days of his joining the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. During the course of a hunting expedition he happened to be a victim of a sudden attack of a tiger. The attack was so subtle and unexpected that he did not gain time to pull out his sword from his sword — belt even. Albeit, he exploded the hackneyed myth that a man is quite helpless before a beast like a tiger or a lion which is generally known as a beast of pray. Sardar Hari Singh faced the crucial situation with such boldness that he managed to catch hold of the jaw of the beast forcefully with his hands and pushed it away with the prowess of arms arranging thus to kill it with his sword. Baron Charles Hugel was also aware of Sardar Hari Singh's appellation of Nalwa and his 'having cloven the head of a tiger who had already seized him as its pray.'¹⁴ He was also handed over the portrait personally by Sardar Hari Singh showing the act of killing the tiger.¹⁵

Before delving on the military achievements of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa it is quite in the fitness of things to delineate here in a few lines the position of the army under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Sikhs, often passing through a series of vicissitudes, first establish themselves as a political power in the Punjab in 1765. But their mode of fighting then was desultory and hardly suited to the requirements of a well-settled state. However, Maharaja Ranjit Singh 'built up a strong, centralised and effectively controlled military system by amalgamating the best elements in the foreign with best elements found in the indigenous fighting mechanisms.'¹⁶ The introduction of foreign element in the shape and form of recruitment of European generals by the Maharaja was a conspicuous feature which proved indispensable in sealing the north-west border after the subjugation of Central Punjab. Major Hugh Pearse writes in this connection 'The only powers that the Maharaja now

had cause to fear were the British and the Afghans, and with the object of facing them on equal terms, Ranjit Singh set about the task of raising a large army, formed on the European system. With this object in view he gave employment to a considerable number of foreign officers, of whom the most important were General Ventura, Allard. Court and Avitabile, Colonel Gardner and Van Carlaudt.¹⁷

Hari Singh Nalwa's significant military campaign was that of Kasur¹⁸, the so called 'mythological rival of Lahore.'¹⁹ in A. D. 1807 when he exhibited his art of warfare as a commander of an independent division. Maharaja Ranjit Singh managed four expeditions to Kasur from A. D. 1800 to A. D. 1802 and it was in February 1807²⁰ that the last campaign of Kasur was undertaken. As a matter of fact, this time both the Sikhs and Afghans left no stone unturned to arouse the religious sentiments of their troops. The Afghans proclaimed crusade against the Sikhs and took it as *jehad* while the Sikhs were also determined to defeat the *ghazis*. Sayed Muhammad Latif has given a detailed account of the victory of the Maharaja albeit, he seems to be prejudiced to some extent and the whole account needs clarification since it is one of the earliest secondary account available and the later writers have opted to use it according to their own whims.

Latif states that Kutab-ud-Din Khan of Kasur, the successor of Nizam-ud-Din Khan again became troublesome for the Maharaja who was very eager to remove this thorn from his way. Latif holds that Ranjit Singh assessed the whole situation and very rightly perceived that the acquisition of Kasur from its Mohammedan owners and the subjugation of the Pathan colonists would tend materially to the advancement of his own prestige and popularity amongst the Khalsa. A formidable expedition was organised in which prominent Sardars fought under the overall command of the Maharaja. Those included Sardar Hari Singh²¹, Sardar Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Sardar Nihal Singh Attari, Baba Phula Singh, Sardar Fateh singh Ahluwalia, Sardar Dhana Singh Malwai and Sardar Fatch Singh Kalianwala.²² The invading army assembled at village Naushera about fifteen miles away from Kasur and made a collective march onwards towards Kasur. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa's army also joined the main wing from there. Latif states that the invading army invested the town cutting off completely all the communications from without. The siege which lasted for a month reduced the Afghans to such

a miserable state that they having emptied the whole store of provisions in the fort commenced living on the flesh of horses and cattle. Latif holds that the Sikhs laid waste the territory with more than their ordinary vengeance. Their artillery levelled to the ground a major portion of the walls of the city. Latif's statement is quite subjective that 'barbarity was shown by the Sikhs towards the tender sex, many of whom committed suicide by strangling or throwing themselves into wells, thus preferring death to dishonour. Hundreds of women and children were carried away as slaves and numerous helpless people were deprived even of their wearing apparel and forced to go about naked.' ²³

As a matter of fact, Latif's prejudice seems to be natural as he allowed a fair play to the idea of interference of faith and religion in the details of his writing. Certain points most vividly clarify this issue. Latif points out that 'Kutab-ud-Din shut himself up in the fortress of Kasur but internal seditions and broils completed the ruin of his family, and at the end of March, he was compelled to surrender, and retire to his territory of Mamdot, on the opposite bank of the Satlej, holding it in *Jagir*, subject to his supplying 100 horsemen for service when required.'

The above statement of Latif makes it clear for itself that inspite of the Pathans having raised *jehad* against the Sikhs and notwithstanding the determination of the Sikhs to end the nuisance of the Afghans, the victorious armies of the kingdom of Lahore under the command and guidance of responsible commanders like Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa treated Kutab-ud-Din on humanitarian basis. Latif himself confesses and pages of history are full of evidence that he was granted a service *jagir*, a treatment which was given to all the dispossessed chieftains by the Maharaja. No stern and strict attitude was shown to him inspite of his having raised a hue and cry against the Maharaja and gave the whole issue a religious colouring. Nevertheless, the issue between the Lahore troops and the Afghan force was not a religious issue. It was a time when acquisition of territory by winning victory in the battle field was considered a legal right. Moreover, the Sikhs have never been known for their maltreatment with women folk and children. It is quite appropriate to point out here that the general rules of discipline and morality in vogue during the fight of the *Dal Khalsa* with the forces of Ahmad Shah Durrani in the 18th century were observed and considered obligatory by the mini rulers of the twelve misls in the Punjab during the *milsdari*

period of Sikh history. Those rules of conduct were never neglected by the commanders of the Lahore army during the reign of Ranjit Singh. Hence the molestation of women and children was ordinarily not a possibility for the Sikh commanders, like the Nalwa Sardar, who were otherwise well known for their generosity and sober treatment with the Muslims. Latif's statement in this regard is not corroborated by the later writers in their works.

Latif states that the Maharaja granted the Afghan Chief a *jagir* in the Gurgaon district subject to the same military conditions as were imposed upon his uncle. This explains how the Afghan chiefs were treated with consideration. Moreover, Latif makes a point that the territory of Kasur was conquered by Kutab-ud-Din Khan and his brother in 1800 from Rai of Raikot with the support of a turbulent Mussalman tribe inhabiting the neighbouring country. It was thus, not a purchased asset of the Nawab who had acquired it with force and was captured by Ranjit Singh in his own turn by the prowess of arms in the battlefield.

Hari Singh Nalwa was, of course, the first to march inside the city gate of Kasur with his division called 'Sher-dil Rajman.' The troops under the Nalwa Sardar caught Nawab Kutab-ud-Din Khan alive and presented him before Maharaja Ranjit Singh²⁴. The enthusiasm and initiative he showed in capturing the enemy endeared him to the Maharaja and he was sufficiently rewarded by the grant of *jagir*. It is correct to say that the capture of Kasur 'extinguished the only Pathan colony in the Central Punjab.'²⁵ As a matter of fact, the acquisition of this stronghold of Afghans by the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a significant measure in enhancing the prestige of Lahore kingdom by reducing one significant rival power to zero.

Henry Lepel Griffin is of the opinion that the gallantry of the Nalwa Sardar in the battle field of Kasur was very much appreciated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was granted a *jagir* of Rs. 30,000 annually with a command of 800 troops.²⁶

Sardar Hari Singh's military genius and enthusiasm had already been tested in the victorious battle of Kasur and its annexation to the kingdom of Lahore. The diplomatic genius of the Nalwa sardar was also put to a touch stone during the trans-Satlej campaigns of the Maharaja in which field he also showed his worth. In September 1807,

Rani Aus Kour of Patiala appealed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh to solve a family dispute which request, of course, provided an opportunity to the Maharaja to cross the cis-Satlej territory²⁷ and Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa to show his diplomatic genius. Tradition holds that Maharaja Ranjit Singh crossed the Satlej at the head of a handsome number of troops.²⁸ Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was said to have been instructed by the Maharaja to affect negotiations for peace which duty he was able to perform with great satisfaction of his mentor. The Maharaja fought no battle at Patiala and came back victorious in his mission after seizing some territory including that of Rani Nur-u-Nisa of Ludhiana. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa is also stated to have counter attacked some Pathans near Malerkotla who tried to assault him and the Khalsa troops on their way back to Lahore.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa's next significant military achievement was to reduce to submission Sardar Jiwan Singh, the ruler of Sialkot who was asked by the Maharaja to surrender his possessions. On the refusal of the Sialkot Chief, Sardar Hari Singh received instructions from the Maharaja to march against him. Immediate and instant action was taken by Nalwa Sardar for the compliance of the order and led a punitive expedition to Sialkot. Jiwan Singh was able to give a tough fight to the Lahore troops for two days after which he raised his hands in peace. The surrender of Sialkot Chief in the battle of Sialkot made the Maharaja undisputed claimant of this tract of land and raised the prestige of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa in the eyes of the Master of Lahore. The rival chiefs at the Lahore court also acknowledged the significant contribution of Nalwa Sardar.²⁹

The strategic significance of Sialkot lay in the fact that it was a very fertile tract extending its dimensions upto Jammu. Moreover, Maharaja Ranjit Singh after bringing to submission a major part of the Central Punjab made it a centre of his further political aggrandisement.

Hari Singh Nalwa's next significant military achievement was the conquest of Multan. Before annexing Multan in 1818, six expeditions were sent by the suzerain of Lahore.³⁰ Resultantly tribute was collected every time albeit, annexation was never visualized and attempted. Though Nalwa Sardar's role is not traceable in all those battles yet it seems very probable that he contributed in almost all the campaigns. He,

of course, won laurels of war in the last and significant expedition of A. D. 1818. Besides the Multan campaigns from A. D. 1802 to A. D. 1818, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa had to his credit the subjugation of the territory of Mitha Tiwana, Rajauri, Naushera etc. from which strip tribute was realized for the kingdom of Lahore.³¹

Multan had great commercial and strategic importance having been the gateway of Afghanistan. Moreover, it was a master key to unlock the country around Sind besides a brisk trade centre. Even during the Mughal rule it was an important headquarter and fell into Afghan custody after the fall of the Empire. It was annexed with the territory of the Bhangi Misl in A. D. 1771 and remained a part and parcel of that Misl for almost a decade. It fell into the hands of Muzaffar Khan, an Afghan Chief, a relation of Timur Shah by the courtesy of the latter in A. D. 1779. Muzaffar Khan theoretically acted as the governor of Multan and a feudatory chief of the king of Kabul. Albeit, he enjoyed independent jurisdiction when Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to power. Though the Maharaja was not much interested in annexing Multan at the very outset as usual as has been narrated elsewhere yet he effected its annexation in 1818 when Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa played a conspicuous role in its full and final control.³² Regarding the reason of the capture of Multan by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Cunningham observes: "He (the Maharaja) thought the Sikhs had as good a right as the Afghans to take what they could and the actual possessor of Multan had rather asserted his own independence than faithfully served the heirs of Ahmad Shah."³³

The position of Multan in the transitional period of its annexation by Lahore kingdom is enumerated here for clarity and comprehension. The first expedition to Multan was sent from Lahore in A. D. 1803. Sir Lepel Griffin writes that Nawab Muzaffar Khan submitted before the Maharaja and acknowledging the latter's sovereign position consented to pay him annual tribute instead of the king of Kabul. The Lahore ruler returned to his capital after receiving huge money from Muzaffar Khan. But the Lahore troops had a survey of the country and the close vicinity of Multan expecting a further probe into sometimes in the subsequent years.

It was in A.D. 1805 that the second campaign was attempted taking in view the disloyalty of the Nawab who had seized paying the committed tribute. Albeit, the Maharaja had come back before reaching

the destination, the news of the arrival of Jaswant Rao Holkar to Punjab having reached him. As the Maharaja had already reached in the vicinity of Multan, he collected the desired tribute and gave sanction to the Nawab to carry on his administration as a feudatory of the ruler of Lahore.

Another campaign was arranged against Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan in 1807. The reason of sending this expedition chiefly being the designs of the Nawab to give a crushing defeat to the Lahore troops on collaborated basis with the Nawab of Kasur. A crusade was, nevertheless, raised against the troops of the Maharaja in the name of *jehad*.³⁴

Tradition goes that Nawab Muzaffar Khan after supporting Kutab-ud-Din with money and despatching war equipment and rations to the proposed place for collective use, slipped away calmly to pay a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Lahore troops caught hold of the strategic places around Multan which made the Nawab confine his troops in the Multan fort. The Maharaja having been unsuccessful in reducing the fort took resort in negotiations and marched back to Lahore after receiving a huge sum of money from the Nawab as fine.³⁵

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa played a conspicuous role in the campaign of A. D. 1810. The Maharaja himself led a huge force to Multan. He marched from Lahore as the overall head of his troops on 20th February and reached Multan on the 24th. The battle commenced on the 25th morning and till evening blood shed wrought havoc. Both the Sikhs and the Afghans fought desperately. Ultimately the Afghan soldiers retreated in the dusk and the city of Multan was captured by the Lahore troops.³⁶ Sayed Muhammad Latif's account, though it is subjective as far as his description of the Afghans is concerned yet assessing objectively, it enhances our knowledge about this campaign. Latif state, "the Maharaja hastened on his long contemplated expedition to Multan, and called upon Muzaffar Khan to surrender it to him in the name of the Kabul king, to whom the governor was bound. The Nawab sent his agents with an humble message and promised to pay the stipulated subsidy within a reasonable time³⁷, but as the Maharaja was determined upon annexing this fertile province, no excuses were listened to, and in a short time, the whole Sikh army was encamped before Multan, after having ravaged the surrounding country by the way."³⁸

Latif argues that the Nawab, "made his preparations for defence, and provided the fort with abundance of water, provisions and supplies. The Sikh army, which had reached Multan on the 24th of February, took possession of the city on the following day.³⁹ The appearance of the Sikh army at Multan and their occupation of the town, spread alarm throughout the neighbouring country. Muhammad Khan, the chief of Leia and Bhakkar, bought off the invader by the payment of Rs. 1,20,000 as ransom for his State⁴⁰, and the chief of Bahawalpur, Sadiq Muhammad Khan, though a friend of Muzaffar Khan, offered a lakh as tribute, but as the Maharaja wanted more substantial aid, the offer was not accepted. The Bahawalpur chief was, at last, compelled to furnish a contingent of 500 cavalry for service in the impending Multan campaign."⁴¹

Latif goes on describing that the "citadel of Multan was now closely besieged by the Sikh army, but the Pathans offered a stout resistance, and the most strenuous attempts of the Sikh soldiers to carry the fort by assault signally failed. A heavy bombardment was kept up for several days but without any effect.⁴² Batteries were then erected opposite the fort, and an incessant fire was maintained, but hardly an impression was made on the citadel. Ranjit Singh made the most solemn and lavish promises to the chiefs who should distinguish themselves in the action by the earliest effective advance.⁴³ He personally reconnoitred the enemy's position, examined his posts and fixed his own, marking out the spots for the batteries and assigning lines of approach to the different chiefs whose sense of duty to their countrymen was appealed to with vehemence. Extensive transport arrangements were made both by land and water from Lahore and Amritsar, and the whole resources of the country were unreservedly placed at the disposal of the military authorities to secure this much coveted possession."⁴⁴

The famous Bhangi *top*, named 'Zamzama' was brought from Lahore to batter down the walls of the fort, but it made little impression on the besieged. It discharged a ball of two and half maunds (*kacha*) or 80 lbs. in weight; but the appliances for working this huge piece of ordnance were wanting in the Sikh Camp, while nobody possessed sufficient science and skill to make a proper use of it.⁴⁵ Some little impression that was made on the ramparts of the citadel by the Sikh artillery had the effect only of redoubling the zeal of the besieged, who in countermining, blew up the battery of Sardar Atar Singh Dhari, close to the fort, killing the Sardar and twelve others and severely wounding

many more, among whom were Sardar Nihal Singh Attariwala and the youthful Hari Singh Nalwa.⁴⁶

Tradition holds that on seeing the siege of the fort of Multan prolonging for an extraordinary period, Maharaja Ranjit Singh hit upon a plan. He suggested his men to volunteer themselves for coming forward and digging channels below the fort of Multan for scaling the walls and making a passage for the Lahore troops to enter the fort. On seeing that, persons like Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa offered themselves for this odd and dangerous pursuit; many a soldiers came forward and made a queue for doing the needful. So much so that Maharaja Ranjit Singh felt much enthusiastic about the exigency of the time and he himself came forward offering himself to march forward for digging the channels. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, as goes the tradition, at this juncture appealed to the Maharaja that his life was indispensable and most humbly and respectfully persuaded the Maharaja to withdraw himself from the proposed peril. Ultimately Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa along with a number of volunteers performed the stipulated job amidst the shower of gun shots from the citadel of Multan Fort. While the Nalwa Sardar was busy in arranging to scale the walls of the fort, a fire pot exactly fell on the place where he was discharging his duties. Resultantly, the Sardar's body was miserably burnt. It was only after a lapse of much time that the Sardar recovered from the burns after getting a prolonged treatment at Gujranwala.

During the 5th and 6th expeditions sent to Multan in the years A. D. 1816⁴⁷ and A. D. 1817, the Maharaja satisfied himself with the exacting of *nazar* from the Nawab and the final attempt was made in A. D. 1818 for the capturing and annexing of Multan with the kingdom of Lahore, after making huge military preparations in view of the determined capacity of Muzaffar Khan to show resistance. It is stated that working boats from the Jhelum, Ravi and Chenab were forced to work for the invariable supply of provisions. Rani Mehtab Kaur helped in this direction. Illahi Bux of the artillery force of Ranjit Singh made conspicuous arrangements for battering the fort of Multan. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa commanded an independent division of troops along with other Sardars of repute namely Dewan Chand, Diwan Moti Ram, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia etc. under the nominal command of Prince Kharak Singh. Tradition has it that the Maharaja made a whole hearted prayer before the Almighty that he would pave the outer *parkarma* or

circumambulation of Harmandir Sahib with marble on the eve of his annexing Multan after scaling the Multan Fort.

The Nawab with his eight sons gave the Lahore troops a determined fight and gave away his life in the battle field fighting upto the last breath. Generals like Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and Misar Diwan Chand were amply rewarded with cash money and *jagir* whereas the two living sons of Nawab Muzaffar Khan were granted maintenance *jagir*.

Hari Singh Nalwa's successful expeditions of Kashmir in the years 1814 and 1819 added another feather in his cap. The first expedition, however, despatched in 1813 being conspicuous one in which the participation of the Nalwa Saldar is not traceable, the grand total of the Kashmir expeditions having been three. The bewitching scenery of Kashmir always remained an attraction to invaders.⁴⁸ It remained a part and parcel of Mughal India upto 1752 when it was captured by Ahmad Shah Durrani. From henceforth it remained under Afghan domination to be governed by an Afghan governor one after another. Atta Muhammad was the governor of Kashmir in 1811 about which year Maharaja Ranjit Singh was contemplating for its conquest.⁴⁹

The first expedition of Kashmir by the Lahore troops need not be elaborated here although it simply resulted in the handing over of Shah Shuja, the Ex-ruler of Kabul in the custody of the Maharaja. The Shah ultimately surrendered the Koh-i-Noor to him. This expedition of Kashmir was the joint adventure of Wazir Fateh Khan, the Wazir of Shah Mahmud of Kabul and Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁵⁰ Wazir Fateh Khan, however, gave a diplomatic defeat to the Khalsa though it was its virtual victory.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh avenged his diplomatic defeat in the first Kashmir expedition of 1813 by wresting Attock from the Afghans.⁵¹ The Fort of Attock was in the possession of Jahandad Khan brother of Atta Muhammad of Kashmir. With the attention of capturing Attock the Maharaja ordered his confident generals namely Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, Shamu Singh, Khalsa Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Bhama Singh Mallianwala etc. to reach Attock with forced marches.⁵² As Jahan Muhammad was quite apprehensive of the designs of Wazir Fateh Khan over Attock, the Maharaja negotiated with him and got hold over Attock without fighting any battle. On hearing these developments, Wazir Fateh Khan

declared *jehad* against the Sikhs by mobilising the Afghan opinion in his favour. The Afghans of different tribes⁵³ around the vicinity of Hazara were appealed by the Wazir to come to his rescue.

Consequently, Maharaja Ranjit Singh opted to despatch his prominent generals to affect the conquest of Attock.⁵⁴ Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, Sardar Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Mohkam Chand were among those who took lead in defending Attock against the Afghans. A significant battle was fought on the bank of the Indus at a place known as Hazro situated in the vicinity of Attock. The battle was significant as it provided Maharaja Ranjit Singh full hold over Attock, the commanding fort of the Indus highway which was a significant step for further expansion of Ranjit's rule in the North-West part of the Punjab. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and the other generals got an opportunity to give a pitched battle to the enemy in the Battle of Hazro. Their position was sound by way of manpower and the equipment of warfare at their disposal. The seizure of Attock was definitely a step towards establishing Nalwa Sardar's dread in the heart of the Afghans.

The members of the second expedition of Kashmir in 1814,⁵⁵ in which Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was destined to lead the vanguard, got hold over the significant passage of Baram gala and by forced marches captured Haripur and Mirpur.⁵⁶ The possession of those two strategic places further put the troops led by the Nalwa Sardar in a very embarrassing position because they were surrounded by the Afghans in the battle field of Supin. The loss of manpower in the Sikh enforcement was great. Heavy rain and cold turned the whole affair for the Lahore troops from bad to worse. Finding no alternative for safety, the troops of Lahore had to retreat. Albeit, the gallantry shown by the Nalwa Sardar did not lag behind anything. Brave Sardars of Lahore kingdom like Dessa Singh and Fateh Singh Chhachhi died heroically while giving the enemy a united front.

The credit of the expedition which was led in 1819 to Kashmir, however goes to Mir Diwan Chand who was honoured after the victory with the title of *Fateh-O-Nusrat Nasib* or the person destined for victory. General Hari Singh's division reached the field of battle after the defeat and surrender of Afghans although he played a conspicuous role in subduing certain important Afghan Chiefs and creating peaceful condition for the Lahore kingdom. The Sardar also secured for the

kingdom of Lahore the region around Dhanur and Pakhli. The Fort of Darband was got vacated from the Afghans by the Nalwa Sardar which action gradually established the fame of his generalship throughout that region, Latif writes in this connection that Hari Singh Nalwa, Sardar Dal Singh and Dewan Bhawani Das, who had been sent to reduce the Fort of Darband and other strongholds in the valley, were successful in the complete subjugation of those places.⁵⁷

FOOT-NOTES

1. Baba Prem Singh Hoti, *Khalsa Raj de Usarie*, n.p., 1942, p. 185; Cf. Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and his Generals*, Jullundur, 1976, p. 102.
2. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kasmir and the Punjab*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 255.
3. *Ibid.* Cf. Baba Prem Singh Hoti, *Hari Singh*, Ludhiana, 1937, p. 36 writes that he had an opportunity of seeing for himself the hand written *sanads* and orders of Sardar Hari Singh with certain frontier Afghans. The Sardar had the facility of speaking Pashto fluently.
4. Baron Charles Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
5. *Ibid.* Also see Henry T. Prinsep (Compiled), *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, 1970(reprint),p. 126.
6. Baron Charles Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
7. It is usually believed that he was administered *pahul* i n A. D. 1801.
8. See for instance, Prem Singh Hoti, *Hari Singh Nalwa*, pp. 36-38; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, Patiala (reprint), 1970, 53; also see Qadryar, *Si Harfian* (ed. Ganda Singh), Patiala, 1965, p. ix introduction.
9. A.S. Sandhu, *General Hari Singh Nalwa*, New Delhi, 1987, p. 2. The author states that he obtained this information from the descendants of Nalwa Sardar.
10. Shahmat Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
11. Dewan Amar Nath, *Iqbal Namah Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Ms. Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala, ff 56-57.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Baron Charles Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1964, preface.
17. Major Hugh Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller; Memories of Alexander Gardner*, London, n.d., p. 176 fn.

18. Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (Pbi. tr.), Patiala, 1968, p. 147; J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1915, p. 121.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Sayed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Lahore. 1889, p. 366.
21. Qadryar, *op. cit.*, p. x.
22. Prem Singh Hoti, *Hari Singh Nalwa*, p. 45.
23. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 367.
24. Qadryar, *op. cit.*, p.x.
25. A.S. Sandhu, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
26. Henry Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore, pp. 14, 145.
27. Cf. Kanhiya Lal, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-174.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-205.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. J.D. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
34. Kanhiya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 147; Cf. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p.121.
35. Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnamah Ranjit Singh (Persian)*, Lahore, 1876, pp. 324-42.
36. Cf. Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 1953, pp. 105-06.
37. Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-87.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid*

47. Sayed Asgar Ali Shah Jaffari, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, n.d., p. 291.
48. Major Hugh Pearse, *op.cit.*, p.176.
49. For details see J.H. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p.102.
50. Sayed Asgar Ali Shah Jaffari, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
51. Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnamah Ranjit Singh*, p. 282; It is quite appropriate to point out here that by A. D. 1768, the perspective Misl chiefs were in possession of major portion of Punjab extending in the East from the bank of Jamuna, running from Buriya to Karnal in the west as far as the Indus from Attock to the vicinity of Bhakkar. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1978, p. 248.
52. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* (Pbi.tr.), Amritsar, 1985, p. 164. It is generally believed that Attock fort was wrested by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, New Delhi, 1980, p. 48.
53. The tribes were barbarous and savages. Even during the rule of the British they did not improve their outlawed activities. Mr Temple, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner Punjab wrote of their character, "Now these tribes are savages—noble savages perhaps—and not without some tincture of virtue and generosity, but still absolutely barbarious, nevertheless." W.H. Paget (Compiled), *A Record of the Expeditions Undertaken Against the North-West Frontier Tribes*, p. 2.
54. ".....it was the natural policy of the ruler, whenever he sent an army into the field. to put at its head one of his own chiefs. Consequently, the Sirdar's part was the general plan of the campaign determining what roads should be pursued, what halts made, and when a battle should be fought." G.R. Esmile, *Thirty-Five Years in the Punjab*, Edinburg, 1908, p. 174.
55. Anonymous, *History of the Punjab and of the Rise, Progress and Present Condition of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), pp. 24-32.
56. Kanhiya Lal, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-66.
57. Sayed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

CHAPTER - III

SEALING OF THE BORDER - II

There is no denying the fact that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was quite conscious of the significance of North-West frontier for the defence of his territorial acquisitions and for the purpose of expansion right from the very beginning of his military career. Thus, a search for a scientific North-West frontier was not only logical but also a necessity for him and a foregone conclusion. The key note of acquisition of the major strip of the North-West frontier vis-a-vis Bannu, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan etc. including Peshawar lay in the security from this frontier. Alexander Burnes opines that the Maharaja captured Dera Ismail Khan particularly with a view to have an access to Peshawar linking his approach with the banks of Indus. Thus, we see that slowly and steadily the Maharaja ensured security from the peril of foreign invasions from the North-West. It will be worth while to delineate the major contribution of Hari Singh Nalwa in this respect which has not hitherto been explained.

A significant battle which was fought by the Nalwa Sardar in this front is known as the battle of Khakha fought against Ghulam Ali, a self styled Rajput Chief. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa led an expedition against him in 1822. He not only caught the said chief alive and sent him to Lahore in tight security but also subdued the tribe with a stern hand. Some writers believe that the Maharaja was so pleased over this venture of the Nalwa Sardar that he allowed him to strike a coin in his name. Albeit, no historical evidence is available on the point.

Marching of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa in the tract of Pakhli and Dhamtur also deserves mention here. He, with his usual sagacity and vision, was able to pacify a revolt against the Lahore Court arising in this region¹. As a matter of fact, this area had been given by the Maharaja to the Nalwa Sardar as a service *Jagir*.

Although Latif's version has neither been confirmed by any other historian nor has Latif been relied upon much about the harsh measures mentioned by him as taken by the Nalwa Sardar albeit, his statement leaves us in no doubt that the rebellion was, of course, quelled. The story of the havoc created by Sardar Hari Singh seems to be a prejudicial whim. Latif writes that the tribes of Pakhli and Dhamtur rebelled and Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa to whom the area had been assigned in *jagir*

was summoned by the Maharaja and despatched at the head of a force for inflicting punishment on the offenders. Hari Singh is said to have spread havoc in the invaded region. Pakhli and Dhamtur were burnt and thousands of people rendered homeless.² This may be argued that no evidence of rendering of thousands of people homeless is available in any historical record.

Henry Lepel Griffin in connection with Sardar Hari Singh in Pakhli states: "obedience was not easy to Hari Singh for the wild mountaneers to the number of 20,000 opposed his passage, on this way of Mankera and at Pakli he was compelled to halt with his force of 7,000 men. Pakli had long been a spot dreaded by merchants, for the hillmen of that place were accustomed to demand a toll on shawl, wood and other Kashmir merchandise. Hari Singh after vain efforts to induce the enemy to yield him a passage, attacked them with vigour, and storming their blockades defeated them with great slaughter. After this he imposed a fine of Rs. 5 on each house in the district, and proceeded southwards to join the Maharaja who was much pleased with his exploit and forgave him the unpaid balance of the Kashmir revenue."³

There is sufficient evidence to prove that Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa participated in almost all the battles fought by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the North-West frontier although his participation and martial activities are not easily traceable in historical records and needs scrutiny.

We may trace the campaigns led by the Lahore court for the conquest of Peshawar from time to time and its final annexation with the kingdom of Lahore in order to trace out the details of Nalwa Sardar's contributions in achieving victory at various places at different stages.

There is no denying the fact that Maharaja Ranjit Singh's master mind very well assessed the strategic importance of Peshawar being the strong hold of Afghans. Virtually peace in central Punjab was possible only by sealing the border of Kabul, and Peshawar being geographically situated in its close proximity was an indispensable asset for Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Thus, ultimately the strip of Peshawar became the bone of contention between the Maharaja and the Afghans. After the conquest of Attock, Maharaja's solid and concrete target of conquest was Peshawar as the exigency of time so demanded.

The murder of Wazir Fateh Khan of Kabul in A. D. 1818⁴ provided

the Maharaja the desired opportunity to attempt conquest of Peshawar as consequent to his murder the two major factions of the Afghans—the Sadazui's and Barakzais—came to be seen at dagger's drawn with each other. Moreover, 'the possession of Peshawar, except as a step to further acquisitions, does not appear to have been advantageous to Ranjeet Singh. According to Burnes, it was a drain upon the finances of Lahore, with the additional evil of leading the Sikhs into constant collision with the fierce tribes.'⁵

Maharaja Ranjit Singh availed himself of anarchy in Kabul and made an invasion of Peshawar, the South-West-Eastern frontiers of Kabul with Punjab having been neglected by Sultan Yar Mohammad Khan and Dost Mohammad Khan, the then Afghan governors of Peshawar who found themselves helpless and vacated the city. After appointing Jahandad Khan, the ex-governor of Attock in place of Yar Mohammad Khan⁶, the Maharaja subsequent to his receiving *nazrana* retreated. Those historical events took place in November 1818.

The second Peshawar expedition was despatched by the Maharaja in A. D. 1822 because of the simple reason that Dost Muhammad Khan and Yar Muhammad Khan soon managed to expel the Maharaja's nominee from Peshawar and re-established their governorship. Sohan Lal Suri writes that on receiving the news of their entrance in Peshawar, the Maharaja despatched General Hari Singh Nalwa, Sardar Dhana Singh Malwai and Jagat Singh Attariwala at the head of ten to twelve thousand infantry and cavalry to subdue them⁷. Albeit, they managed to reconcile by paying handsome *nazrana* and by accepting their submission.

In the year 1823, Muhammad Azim, the Kabul Wazir occupied Peshawar with the assistance of a large army. Those were the battles of Jahangira and Naushehra fought in March 1823 where Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and other prominent personalities of Lahore kingdom were pitted against the Afghans. To mention a few, Akali Phula Singh, Gorkha Bal Bhadra, Miser Diwan Chand, Sardar Attar Singh etc. marched in the battle field at the head of their divisions and gave a defeat to the Afghans in the battle of Jahangira but a more serious and awe inspiring battle was fought against the Afghans at Naushehra which is also known as the battle of Tibba Tehri. Generals Allard and Ventura's participation in this battle with their respective divisions and the trained army of Lahore kingdom with the Akali division of the army had

absolutely no match for the untrained militia. The Afghans soon submitted and the fort was captured. Albeit, the Lahore troops lost an indispensable commander, Akali Phula Singh⁸ whose dashing feats of warfare had surprised one and all.

He had obtained much celebrity in the battles by sudden and surprising attacks at times when recourse to regular warfare had become ineffectual.⁹ Although the Sikhs won the day but not with much ease. The presence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, nevertheless, inspired the Lahore troops who fought vigorously against the combined forces of Afghans from Attock and Peshawar strips who declared *jehad* or holy war against the Sikhs. Tradition holds that Maharaja Ranjit Singh, on seeing his forces pitted against the Afghans involved the assistnace of Guru Gobind Singh. Tradition has it that the Guru was mystically present in the battle field and the arrows of the Sikhs ultimately proved fatal for the Afghans.

Latif gives a detailed account of this battle. He writes that exultant at the success of the charge, the Afghans made attacks upon the flying Sikh columns and executed firece vengeance on them. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, with his reserve, now led the attack in person and a promiscuous fire was opened on the foe by his rallying battalions as well as by the artillery.¹⁰ The Ghazis, though unprovided with supplies or provisions, had even been defrauded of their promised pay, faced the assault with extreme bravery and repulsed every attack till sunset, by which time about half of their original number had been destroyed.¹¹

Maharaja Ranjit Singh then brought forward his Najib and Gorkha battalions in support of the advanced columns, and placed a strong detachment at the base, with orders to shoot instantly any soldier of the Lahore army found turning his back on the scene of action. At the same time orders were issued to the troops posted on the other side of the hills to advance to the rear and dislodge the enemy from their position.¹² The Ghazis, who were ignorant of the art of war found themselves between two fires. Sword in hand they fell upon the Sikh artillery and engaged in a hand to hand fight. Albeit, by this time a great number of them had fallen and the Sikhs dislodged them from their positions.¹³ The remnant part of the Pathan troops cut their way through the enemy to the mountains in the darkness of night but not before they had inflicted severe loss on the disciplined and professional soldiers of the Khalsa

army. There fell in this battle, on the side of the Sikhs many a brave soldiers and commanders among whom were Gharba Singh Manas, Karam Singh Chahal and Balab Dhar Singh, a Gorkha General.¹⁴

The Sikhs had in this battle not less than 24,000 fighting men present and the loss on their side in killed and wounded was estimated by Captain Wade at 2,000. The number of Afghans killed were more than 3,000. Notwithstanding their defeat with great slaughter and loss, the brave and resolute mountaineers re-assembled the following day to renew the contest under their leader Pirzada Muhammad Akbar.¹⁵ Albeit, Muhammad Azim Khan, fearing lest his treasures and harem at Minchini which were a constant source of solicitude to him, might fall into the hands of the invaders, broke up his camp, and the Ghazis in the absence of any support, reluctantly dispersed.¹⁶ The Barakzai Sardar, on hearing the discomfiture of his militia, was greatly distressed. He shed tears, tore his beard and inveighed vehemently against the treason of his brethren, who had brought so dire a calamity upon him. Generals Allard and Ventura were followed to the camp of Muhammad Azim Khan, opposite to the bank of the river by Prince Sher Singh, Dewan Kirpa Ram and Hari Singh Nalwaz.¹⁷ Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent for Yar Muhammad Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan. The Maharaja allowed them to retain Peshawar as tributary to the kingdom of Lahore.

General Hari Singh Nalwa played a conspicuous role first by inflicting a crushing defeat upon the enemy and secondly by pursuing the enemy after the defeat in order to be sure about the victory of the Lahore troops. The battle of Naushehra, nevertheless, made it evident to the frontier tribesmen that the Afghan militia was far weaker than those of Lahore troops. As a matter of fact, this battle sealed the further prospects of Muhammad Azim and established the Sikh supremacy and influence over the strip situated between the Indus and the city of Peshawar.

General Hari Singh Nalwa fought and commanded almost all the formidable battles fought by the Lahore troops against the Afghans of N.W.F.P. Another significant battle fought to pacify the Afghans of the said region was the battle of Saidu fought in the year 1827. Sayed Ahmad who claimed himself to be the messenger of the Prophet inspired

the tribesmen by fervent appeals to recover their territory from the kingdom of Lahore.¹⁸ He gathered together the Afghans of Tirah, Pakhli etc. under his standard. Yar Muhammad also joined the camp of the crusaders. Resultantly, the Lahore troops were driven away from the vicinity of Peshawar.

Hari Singh Nalwa was summoned under the circumstances by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and was despatched to the frontier for restoring law and order and capturing the major parts of the frontier strip. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa gave a blow to the rising power of Sayed Ahmad Bareli.¹⁹ Writing about the struggle of Sayed Ahmad against the Sikhs in 1827, Griffin states that when Sayed Ahmed roused all the fanatic population of Yusufzais for a holy war against the Sikhs and was joined by the Barakzai chiefs of Peshawar, Sardar Hari Singh with 25,000 men was ordered to prevent the Sayed from crossing the Indus. The Sayed was given a great set back. Peshawar was pillaged by the Lahore troops. The palace of Bala Hissar and several buildings were destroyed. The tribute of Peshawar was increased and the son of Yar Muhammad Khan carried away as a hostage.²⁰

Although temporary peace was restored by the Sayed, he afterwards created disturbance for the Maharaja again by occupying Peshawar after some time. Consequently, another expedition was despatched under General Ventura and Prince Sher Singh to reconquer Peshawar in 1830 which was resultantly given on contract for a stipulated revenue to Sultan Muhammad as Governor of Peshawar.

General Hari Singh Nalwa next marched to Peshawar in 1834 for annexing it to the dominion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²¹ General's Court and Ventura also marched to Peshawar at the head of their divisions for its annexation. The opportunity came when during the year 1833-34, there again broke out a civil war in Kabul. The major cause was the conflict of power between Dost Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Kabul and Shah Shuja, the ex-ruler.

On seeing Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and the Lahore troops in close proximity to Peshawar, Sultan Muhammad evacuated the city²² which was occupied by the Nalwa Sardar on 6th May, 1834. Peshawar was, thus, annexed to the kingdom of Lahore. Hari Singh Nalwa was the first non-Muslim governor appointed for the administration of Peshawar.

Gorden states in this connection: "The occupation of Peshawar was Ranjit Singh's last campaign; it effectually sealed the solidarity of his power. There was now nothing more left in Punjab for him."²³ Griffin observes : The conquest by the Maharaja of Peshawar and the hill country of Hazara, which was a difficult and lengthy operation...must be briefly noticed, together with the reduction of the Muhammadan tribes of the Punjab, who were quite as fond of fighting and as gallant soldiers as the Sikhs themselves. What they did not possess was the power of organization and combination, for which the Maharaja was so conspicuous, and which enabled him to subdue separately tribes which united might have successfully resisted him."²⁴

A year after the annexation of Peshawar, Dost Muhammad, the Afghan ruler of Kabul again attempted to regain his supremacy over the frontier strip of Peshawar. Tribesmen from Yusafzai, Mohmmad and Khatak tribes of the vicinity were appealed in the name of religion to jump into the holy war or *jehad* against the Sikhs in order to oust them from the region. Maharaja Ranjit Singh worked on the strategy of gaining some time as he was not well prepared to face the foe instantaneously. Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and Mr. Harlan were duly sent for negotiations. Meanwhile, full preparations were made to face the opposing troops. The advancing Lahore forces took up positions against those of the enemy in the proximity of Peshawar. Albeit, the Afghan troops resultantly retreated and no battle took place. Dost Muhammad avoided bloodshed but his dream of releasing Peshawar from the grip of the Maharaja was not fulfilled as the issue of Peshawar still remained indecisive from the Afghan point of view.

Dost Muhammad did not rest contented and after mobilising all his resources despatched his son Akbar in A. D. 1837²⁵ to recover Peshawar from the custody of the Sikhs. Resultantly, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was sent at the head of the Lahore troops to face the Afghans. Shahamat Ali writes that in the year 1837, Hari Singh advanced towards Khaibar, and repaired and occupied the fort of Jamrud situated close to the entrance of the pass.²⁶ Jamrud turned out to be the field of battle this time where a formidable battle was fought. This battle, known as the battle of Jamrud, is a famous event in the history of the Lahore kingdom as General Hari Singh Nalwa received a fatal shot in this battle and died.²⁷ He had already won a number of well - contested battles and this

time the odds were although not too heavy for him but chance and bad luck did not give way to the Sardar. As a matter of fact, he along with his troops was pitted against the Afghan forces of Dost Muhammad. Whereas Dost Muhammad was able to receive a reinforcement from the frontier strip itself, Hari Singh Nalwa lacked such an assistance. For want of man power and war material he strove extraordinarily hard. In spite of this he did not lose heart. Urgent messages were sent to Lahore to regain the supply which could not help. For want of timely help the Sardar was of course, killed but the Afghans could not dislodge the Lahore troops from Jamrud. General Hari Singh Nalwa gave the last command to his men not to disclose his death and continue giving the enemy a good fight. Accordingly without disclosure, the wounded body of the Commander was brought to the camp and alarming message sent to Maharaja Ranjit Singh under mysterious circumstances, who felt disappointed to listen to the whole affair and lamented over the death of the brave Sardar who could have easily been spared by paying timely heed to the last message of the Sardar. The death of the Nalwa Sardar in odd circumstances was felt as a shot in the arm by all and sundry.

The historical episode of the battle of Jamrud has been narrated and discussed by many a historians working in the field and those who have so far worked on the issue of North-West Frontier and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Poets have sung praises of the chivalry of Sardar Hari Singh which account helps us in gaining knowledge of the whole issue. Sir Lepel Griffin gives a detailed and comprehensive account of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa's campaign of Jamrud which led to his demise in mysterious circumstances. He points out that Hari Singh was directed to build a fort at Jamrud situated at the entrance of the Khaibar pass from the walls of which the Maharaja might glance Jalalabad.²⁸ The Sardar got built the fort of small strength which was quite impregnable to the Khaibar tribes who had not much artillery at their disposal. The construction of the fort which commanded the road to Kabul aroused the suspicions of Amir Dost Muhammad. Muhammad Akbar, the son of Amir Dost Muhammad was equipped with a force of 7,000 horse, 2,000 matchlock men and 18 guns.²⁹ Amir's three other sons Muhammad Afzal Khan, Muhammad Haidar Khan and Azim Khan also joined the expedition. A force of 12,000 to 15,000 Khaibaris joined the main force.³⁰

The fort built up by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and commanded by Mahan Singh Mirpura was besieged by the Afghans and charged with fire from its southern face. Defences were destroyed to a great degree and a big breach made in the wall. General Hari Singh Nalwa who was lying sick at Peshawar, on hearing the news of the siege and destruction of the fort by the Afghans marched with a force of 6000 foot, 1000 regular and 3,000 irregular towards Jamrud and advanced only two miles at the first instance.³¹ Griffin argues that the reinforcement under Sardar Hari Singh gave fresh life to the garrison and the attack of the Afghans was repulsed with vigour; the assailants lost 300 men. Both the armies stood pitted against each other for seven days. Ice was broken by Sardar Hari Singh at last by giving signal of the battle to the Lahore troops.³²

Griffin, while giving further details of the significant battle of Jamrud, argues that the Sikh attack was completely a success in that part of the battle where Zerin Khan and Momind Khan were in command in the advanced division. The two said leaders received wounds and the Afghan troops on seeing the miserable state of affairs retreated their march. Albeit, Shamsh-ud-Din Khan sweeping down with a large body of Afghan cavalry created panic in the Sikh ranks. On the side of the Lahore troops Sardar Hari Singh in spite of the entreaties of Diwan Devi Sahai, Khan-Singh Majithia, Sarmukh Singh Butalia etc. kept his troops in high spirit by encouraging them to repulse the enemy. Griffin winds up by pointing out that during the course of battle Sardar Hari Singh was struck by two balls, one in the side and the other in the stomach.³³ In spite of the understanding that he was mortally injured, the Nalwa Sardar managed to ride as far as his camp lest the troops be discouraged. Griffin's historic statement is noteworthy here when he states that the Sardar swooned as he was dismounted from his horse and an hour later the bravest of the Sikh generals, the man, with the terror of whose name Afghan mothers used to quieten their fretful children was dead. The Sardar who had been grievously injured lay beneath the walls of the Jamrud Fort where reinforcement was the dire need of the moment.³⁴

In the above context a brief account from Sahai Singh's *Var Hari Singh Nalwa Di* and *Se-Harfian* by Qadryar which have become rare documents are given here to enlighten the readers on the issue.

While giving an account of the march of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa at the head of Lahore troops to give a fight to the Afghans in the battle of Jamrud Sahaī Singh states:

Sahaī Singh Kahe suno Khālsā jī
 Harī Singh Sardār hun āp chardā
 kāf kamar kasī Sardār ne jī,
 sabh fauj tiār karvāeo sū
 dhonsā mār ke fauj de nāl chaniā
 bāhr sabh asbāb dharāeo sū
 Harī Singh Sardār dā tap bhārā,
 pat morchā piche hataeo sū³⁵

Qadryar in his *Se Harfian* has given some details of the North-West expeditions of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. After receiving shot from the gun of an Afghan in the battle field of Jamrud, Hari Singh Nalwa issued instructions to his men³⁶ not to disclose the secret of his death to the enemies. In case they knew that mystory, they would squeeze the blood of the Lahore troops:

Alf ākhdā Harī Singh suno yāro
 merī gal de wal dhiān karnā

 menū maut dā khof nā zarā yāro
 bādshāh gadā hai sabh marnā

 be bahut hushiārī darkār hai jī
 makhfī rakhna maut dā rāz yāro
 meri maut dā zikr nā mūl karnā
 is vich nuksān darāz yāro
 je kar hoeā malūm durānīān nūn
 mera rūh kar giā parvāz yāro
 Qādryār Sarkār de aundiān nūn
 rark chhorsān wāng piāz yāro.

Hari Singh Nalwa further imparted instructions to his soldiers to cover his dead body after lifting it from the ground and placing it on a *charpai*. They were also instructed to declare him as sick with severe attack of expanding of the bronchi. They should not disclose the anxiety of their heart otherwise they would meet disappointment.

Pe pakk pakka salah kar ke
 jadoñ nikal jāve merā dam yāro
 chā bhoeñ manjī utte pā denā
 ate kajj denā merā cham yāro
 muhon kehna sardār bimār hoeā
 baut zor pāeā balgam yāro
 Qādryār nā gam nun zāhr karnā
 nahīñ te kam ho jāvsī tumām yāro.³⁸

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa rendered his services with heart and soul towards extending the boundries of the kingdom of Lahore from 1811 to 1837 upto the natural boundries of the Punjab and went to the extent of sacrificing his life for this patriotic mission. Sealing of the N.W.F. border by the great Sardar is a unique act having international legacy. It was the first time after Anangpal that the series of invasions from the North-West were checked and the tribesmen ruled.

FOOT-NOTES

1. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* (Pbi.tr.), Amritsar, 1985, p. 369.
2. Sayed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1889, p. 428.
3. Lepel H. Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notes of the Principal Families in the Territories under the Panjab Government*, Lahore, 1865, p. 185.
4. Cf. Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (Pbi. tr.), Patiala, 1968, p. 286; also see J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1915, p. 142.
5. Annoymous, *History of the Punjab and of the Rise, Progress, Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs, Vol. II*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 133.
6. For more details about Yar Muhammad Khan in the context of his relations with Ranjit Singh, see Kanhiya Lal, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-97.
7. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, p. 290.
8. Sayed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 429.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 430.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Balab Dhar Singh had served the Nepal Government with great distinction in the war with the English led by Generals Gillespie and Martindell, but having in time of peace been enticed by a married woman, he had fled from his native country, and received assignment under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the Punjab where he died an honourable death. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 430.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. For more details see, Annonymous, *History of the Punjab, Vol. II*,

Patiala, 1970 (reprint) pp. 69-91.

19. For details on Sayed Ahmad see, Kanhiya Lal, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-305; also see H.L. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 199.
20. H.L. Griffin *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 186.
21. Baba Prem Singh Hoti, *Khalsa Raj De Usarie*, n.p., 1942, pp. 190-93.
22. Ganda Singh, 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh', *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: First Death Centenary Memorial*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 42.
23. Sir John J.H. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 104.
24. H.L. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 198-99.
25. Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 54.
26. Ibid. See also Prem Singh Hoti, *General Hari Singh Nalwa*, Ludhiana, 1937, pp. 248-49.
27. Ibid. Also see, Hari Ram Gupta, *Panjab on the Eve of First Sikh War*, Hoshiarpur, 1956, p. 210.
28. Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 187-89; Cf. Anonymous, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-143.
29. Anonymous, Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. H.L. Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 185-87.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Sahai Singh, 'Var Hari Singh Nalwa di' (Shamsher Singh Ashok), *Prachin Jangname*, Amritsar, 1950, p. 106.
36. Qadryar, *Se-Harfian Hari Singh Nalwa* (ed. Ganda Singh), Patiala, 1965, pp. 26-27.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.

CHAPTER - IV

**ADMINISTRATION: GOVERNORSHIP OF
KASHMIR, HAZARA AND PESHAWAR**

Besides a versatile and celebrated warrior and general, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was a good, efficient and successful administrator of his times who proved his worth and capacity not only in the formidable campaigns undertaken by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the sealing of the North-West Frontier border but also in administering and consolidating the country put under his charge. Before taking notice of the administrative assignments of the Nalwa Sardar and the measures taken by him in the discharge of his duties, it is quite in the fitness of things to describe the framework and structure of power of the Maharaja in and around which the Sardar worked.

One of the conspicuous and typical features of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's administration was that he encouraged rather to set up a composite Punjabi culture and Punjabi nationalism by bringing the adherents of main religions of the Punjab with different religious traditions namely the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims on a common platform and forum. By respecting the sentiments of the people of all religions, castes and creeds in various ways and means the Maharaja provided opportunities of nascent Punjabi nationalism. Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted liberal grants in cash and *jagirs* to Hindu, Muslim and Sikh institutions to flourish. Thus, when General Hari Singh Nalwa undertook the arduous task of going on blood-squeezing campaigns or administering people of newly acquired territories, he was taking care of the whole affair with his companions and helpers being brought up in the composite religious conditions. Discipline and secular outlook rather than religious constraints and considerations used to guide the Nalwa Sardar in discharging the duties assigned to him. Henry Lawrence observes with regard to Maharaja Ranjit Singh that members of the deposed ruling families may be seen in Delhi and Kabul in the state of penury, but in the Punjab, there is to be seen not a single ruling family whose territories may have been left unprovided by him. Albeit, this statement does not seem to be cent percent true. Not only the Sikh ruling houses, but those of other faiths too were provided for by him with equal

munificence irrespective of caste and creed and the area he belonged to. Thus, Hari Singh Nalwa was more interested in the making up of the Empire as envisaged by the Maharaja rather than any narrow communal motives.

Another factor which needs elucidation here is that the Maharaja being a great military genius was able to reorganise his army on western lines. Lepel Griffin has rightly pointed out that "military genius of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not so much shown in his generalship as in the skill with which he formed a powerful, disciplined and well equipped army." After all, this was the military stuff which assisted the celebrated General Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa to win dashing victories in the battle field against formidable foes.

In those days of territorial acquisition, prowess of arms was the major factor involved in the capturing of territory as well as its administration. Without a well trained and disciplined army it was not possible at all to consolidate the conquests. Thus, General Hari Singh Nalwa was doubly blessed. He possessed the talents of a good administrator besides his being a brave warrior, and the Maharaja, his mentor was sagacious enough to realise the value of a trained army.

Historians and writers have, of course, realised the value of a trained army for the purpose of winning victories and making conquests albeit, the importance of a trained army in the context of consolidating the conquests has not been made the subject of heated discussion so far. As a matter of fact, the account of successful military services rendered by General Hari Singh Nalwa in the territory of Kashmir, Hazara and Peshawar was decidedly an account of the trained army at his disposal. But at the same time he would not have been able to work wonder in the administrative sphere too without the well equipped and well trained army at his disposal.

Before the reign of Ranjit Singh cavalry was the major force in the *misdari* organisation of army and infantry as well as artillery were not considered so useful wings of the fighting force. The Maharaja gradually visualising the importance of footmen, made infantry a very useful fighting force on the line of the western infantry with the help of European generals.

Similarly, cavalry regular and irregular and artillery were also

made indispensable parts of the regular army of the Maharaja. European officers introduced drill and discipline in all the three wings of the army. The reforms introduced by the Maharaja for making all the three wings of the army a dashing force are depicted in terms of composition, recruitment, equipment, pay, pension, allowances and promotions of the army. As we know, the Lahore army which won remarkable victories under Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and helped him considerably in consolidating the captured regions by keeping strict law and order was composed of Sikhs, Jats, Hindus, Brahm̃ns, Muslims, Sayeds, Rajputs, etc. Broadly speaking, the army organisation of the Maharaja may be defined as *Fauj-i-Ain*, *Fauj-i-be-Qwaid*, *Fauj-i-Khas* and *Fauj-i-Quilajat*.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa who himself obtained lavish *jagirs* from the Maharaja was also assisted in his work by various *jagirdars*. Those *jagirdars* obtained from the Lahore Court civil and military *jagirs*. There were hereditary and non-hereditary *jagirdars* as well who helped the *Nazims* in the discharge of their duties. Anyhow, those *jagirdars* had no permanent rights on the *jagirs* which could be acquired by the Maharaja as and when required.

Before delving on the administrative assignments of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, it is also worthwhile to give a profile of the administrative structure of the Lahore kingdom in the framework of which the Nalwa Sardar worked. Various departments were got organised by the Maharaja by appointing Dewan Bhwani Das after the year 1809. There were as many as twelve main departments at the Centre to conduct the routine work of the whole kingdom. The major departments were: *Daftar-i-Mal*, *Daftar-i-Wajuhāt*, *Daftar-i-Sairāt*, *Daftar-i-Zakhirajat*; *Daftar-i-Roznamcha*; *Daftar-i-Toshakhana*; *Daftar-i-Tahvil*; *Daftar-i-Mawajab*; *Toshakhana-i-Khas*; *Daftar-i-Taujihāt*; *Daftar-i-Ahwab-ul-Mal*; *Daftar-i-Nazrana*.

Provincial administration was divided into significant units. *Parganas*, *taulqas* and *mauzas* represented a suba; there being four subas in the whole empire namely *Suba Lahore*, *Suba Kashmir* also known as *Janat-e-nazi*, *Suba Multan* and *Suba Peshawar*. There is, of course, a divergence of opinion regarding the division of the Empire of Lahore and some hold that it consisted of various districts. It is not ascertained whether these districts worked as independent units or were the subordinate divisions of the subas. Albeit, the fact remains that at some stage of the evolution of the administrative institutions, the

kingsom of Lahore represented the above named *subas* and *nazims* and *kardars* were, of course, the chief functionaries of a *suba*.

Nazim being the head of the *suba*, represented the Maharaja in his area of jurisdiction. While he was responsible for keeping law and order in the *suba*, his court acted as a court of appeal. He listened to cases of *Kardar's* court. As a matter of fact, the post of a *nazim* was handed over by the Maharaja to an individual in whom he reposed unlimited confidence. As in those days no clear cut line of demarcation was drawn between the civil and military duties of a provincial functionary, it was also included in the duties of a *nazim* to lead expeditions wherever and whenever required by the Maharaja. Accordingly, we see that the *nazims* kept divisions of army under them. In the case of General Hari Singh Nalwa we witness him leading expeditions to quell disturbances and revolts in accordance with the orders of the Maharaja while he was working as *nazim*.

Kardar being the head of a district was mainly responsible for collecting the government's share of revenue and depositing it in the treasury. The *kardar* nevertheless, acted as administrative officer with jurisdiction to decide judicial cases.

The city of Lahore being divided into *mohallas*, *Kotwal* was an important administrative functionary who maintained law and order in the city. It seems surprising to note that in those days the kotwal was also responsible for enforcing hygienic rules and regulations and for looking to the general administration of the city.

As General Hari Singh Nalwa during his tenure of office as *nazim* worked within the same framework of central, provincial and judicial administrative set up, it is appropriate to pen down some salient features of the judicial administration. No distinction was made between the civil and criminal cases and the jurisdiction was not defined. Judicial system like the whole administrative system was a secular one and judicial functionaries were appointed from all the communities. Steinbach refers to private arbitration in the villages. We agree with Dr. Ballhatchet that village Panchayats were 'ad hoc tribunals' summoned to decide judicial cases. *Kardars* decided cases in their respective jurisdiction in towns as regards disputes of land, payment of revenue and inheritance etc. *Nazims* administered justice in bigger towns or cities. There is, of

course, a frequent reference to the office of *qazi* and *mufti* in the kingdom of Lahore. Sadulla Chishti was a prominent *mufti*.

We see General Hari Singh Nalwa and General Ventura deciding judicial cases. Judicial authority was also delegated to certain ministers of the empire. Maharaja Ranjit Singh held his court at the metropolis. Social conventions were enforced in the civil which pertain mostly to betrothal, matrimony, landed property and alienation. Established customs and conventions were enforced for the purpose of afflicting punishment in criminal cases. Fine was the major significant mode of punishment inflicted in civil and criminal cases.

Hence, we may safely say that there were no separate officials for dispensing civil and criminal justice. *Nazims* and *Kardars* administered justice in cities and towns and General Hari Singh Nalwa was not an exception.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa as Governor of Kashmir - 1820-21

There are no two opinions that Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was held in esteem more as General owing to his outstanding contribution towards the major conquests of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his exploits in North-Western Frontier Provinces and his valiant and heroic death in the battle of Jamrud. He was certainly one of the most shining stars who stalked on the land of the Punjab during the nineteenth century and struggled hard to give it an identity as sword arm of India. As we know, this great General, owns a legendary reputation as a most efficient warrior and General, certain anecdotes relate in abstract or concrete terms his craving for conquering more and more land for his master, the Maharaja.¹ There may not be cent percent truth in the legends gathered together round the names of great personalities and public heroes, albeit, they go to certain extent in remembering their disposition and activities and the legends concerning the Nalwa Sardar are no exception. The Maharaja's designs on Shikarpur and Sind were well known. Hari Singh Nalwa is said to have told the Maharaja to wear bangles and relax since he was totally incapacitated.²

An intensive probe into the life and activities of the Nalwa Sardar leaves us in no doubt that the glitter that came his way was not only for his qualities of an excellent warrior and General but for his talents of head and heart. Here, we are to concentrate on his governorship of

Kashmir. Curiosity for taking up the subject arose out of the desire to know the truth in the statements of British writers like Prinsep³ and Moorcroft⁴ who have vehemently condemned the Nalwa Sardar's administration as oppressive in Kashmir.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed as many as eight governors to administer the affairs of the province of Kashmir: Dewan Moti Ram for the first term - 1819-20; Hari Singh Nalwa-1820-21; Dewan Moti Ram for the second term-1821-24; Dewan Chuni Lal-1824-25; Dewan Kirpa Ram-1826-30; Bahma Singh-1831-32; Kanwar Sher Singh-1833-34; and Col. Meham Singh - 1834-4.⁵

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa succeeded Moti Ram as Governor of Kashmir and made his mark as an efficient administrator. Before we probe into the administration of the Nalwa Sardar in the Kashmir valley it is worth pointing out the general nature of the administration under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Shahamat Ali, Persain Secretary with the Mission of Lieut. Col. Sir C.H. Wade to Peshawar in 1839 and afterwards Mir Munshi to the Political Resident in Malwa writes in his *The Sikhs and Afghans*.⁶

.....the affairs of the country are conducted by means of Governors or *Kardars*.... They manage the whole business connected with the administration of the territory entrusted to them, and seldom report any case to the court unless it be of high importance when his Highness's orders are communicated by issuing *parwanas*.

The predecessor of Sardar Hari Singh in Kashmir, Dewan Moti Ram cannot be said to have governed Kashmir without waste of efforts. The administration was on the whole mild. Sohan Lal Suri in his *Roznamcha* has rightly assessed the situation when he states that when Hari Singh Nalwa received the reins of the administration, Kashmir was badly facing the after-effects of the famine and consequently, it faced economic stagnation.⁷ Progress in agriculture, trade and industry had been hampered. The position of law and order also cannot be said to be good. As a matter of fact, during the years 1820-22, when Kashmir was facing hardship due to famine, there was a complete chaos and

confusion economically, socially and politically. As such he engaged the whole administrative machinery to improve the state of affairs.

Some of the reforms introduced by the Nalwa Sardar throw useful light on the nature of his rule in the Kashmir valley. He liberated the farmers from the practice of *begar* or forced labour. By the abolition of this system of *begar*, the farmers felt a sense of security and honour.

Cultivators were given incentive by reducing the Government share of revenue to bring more and more land under cultivation. Growing of saffron was encouraged. Afterwards Dewan Moti Ram was obliged to continue these reforms. The wool industry which had gradually witnessed downfall during the Afghan rule was an important feature of the governorship of Sardar Hari Singh. Industry received impetus. Liberal loans were given to the industrial concerns. Reforms were also introduced in the marketing system by insisting upon uniform weights and measures. False and unstandardised measures and weights were discouraged. The Nalwa Sardar contributed considerably towards the revival of paper industry which had deteriorated under the Afghans. Encouragement was provided to the paper manufacturers by granting financial assistance. Tax on grazing was also reduced. Hindus were allowed to make the use of shoes and head-gears which had been disallowed to them before. Levying of tax on births and marriages was also stopped. According to the author of *Guldasta-i-Kashmir* restrictions on the Kashmiri Pandits in connection with worship were removed and converts to Islam were set at liberty to re-convert themselves to their original religion. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa also got built a number of Gurdwaras at places associated with the Sikh Gurus. He is also said to have established Hindu and Sikh colonies in Kashmir.

The above reforms introduced by the Nalwa Sardar in social and economic fields converted his office of governorship into a golden era of progress and achievement in the Kashmir Valley. Consequently, several Kashmiris who had shifted from their native land returned to enjoy the comfort of their homeland. He is also said to have issued a coin called *Hari Singh Rupia*. Writers like Shahamat Ali and Maulvi Hassan Shah argue that this was done with the goodwill of the Maharaja. But this is to be noted that there existed an unmistakable trend in Sikh polity that

the coins could be issued in nobody's name except the Gurus. It is also probable that the rupee known as *Hari Singh Rupia* might connote the *Nanakshahi* rupee in vogue during the days of Nalwa Sardar's tenure as *nazim*.

Notwithstanding the reforms introduced by the Nalwa Sardar mentioned above, some writers condemn his administration of Kashmir on the ground that it was cruel. Here a few such writings are worth mentioning. Sayed Muhammad Latif states: "Although a good soldier, he proved a failure as an administrator, and ground the people of Kashmir with tyranny. He was therefore, recalled after a year."⁸ Henry T. Prinsep writes in this connection, "The harshness of Hari Singh having made him unpopular and obnoxious to the inhabitants of Kashmir, he had been removed... and mild and peaceable Moti Ram was now re-appointed governor."⁹ Moorcroft points out "Sikhs seem to look on Kashmirians as little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine... from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu and two rupees if a Mohammedan."¹⁰ Moorcroft gives us the feeling that the Sikh regime in general was barbarian in character. He also paints the Sikh ruler black by conveying the notion that he was worse to the Muslims.

There is no dearth of writings in favour of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's administration of Kashmir. Kashmir Gazetteer points out, "... In comparison with the Afghans the Sikhs came as a relief to the Kashmirians." Baron Charles Hugel states "men are too valuable to the present ruler of Kashmir to be lightly spared; penalties and stripes are therefore the usual punishments. The people seem to be contented with the justice dealt out to them.... The dreadful cruelties perpetrated by their earlier rulers who for the smallest offence punished them with the loss of their nose or ears, make the poor Indian well satisfied with their little oppression on the part of their governors...."

As a matter of fact, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a benevolent suzerain and could never think of oppression upon the subjects. Moreover, the control of the Maharaja over the governors appointed by him was full and complete and the governors could in no case show negligence in the affairs of the administrative territory. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa who was a favourite of the Maharaja and who on many an occasion won his master's applause could never inflict tyranny on the ruled contrary

to the general consensus in the kingdom and against the wishes of the sovereign. The reforms introduced by him bear testimony if any proof is needed that Sardar Hari Singh's administration in Kashmir was in favour of the people. Moreover, the Sikh administration was free from religious prejudices. Of course, the administrative machinery under the Nalwa Sardar's governorship was geared up and may be said to be stern but not cruel and tyrannical. Firm and strong measures were essential in the border area and more so when the schemes of his predecessor were unduly sympathetic. Sardar Hari Singh's strenuous efforts of pacifying the inhabitants of Baramula and suppressing the frontier tribes of Khakhas around the Kashmir Valley during his governorship of this region are well known.¹¹

While recapitulating the tenure of the Nalwa Sardar as Governor of the Kashmir Valley, Griffin writes:¹²

In 1820 he was appointed Governor of the conquered province in the room of Diwan Moti Ram, who was thought too gentle a ruler for the rude and unsettled population. Hari Singh did not err on the side of leniency. He ruled with strong hand; and the Kashmiris hated him so much that the Maharaja was compelled to recall him in 1821 and re-appoint Moti Ram to the Governorship.

As a matter of fact, Griffin's statement does not seem to be cent percent true because the contemporary sources are clear about the submitting of resignation by Diwan Moti Ram to the Maharaja due to some unavoidable circumstances.¹³ Dewan Amar Nath, a contemporary and a close associate of the court of Maharaja holds that after listening to the humble petition or appeal of the Dewan, the Maharaja appointed Sardar Hari Singh as governor.

To say that the Dewan was 'thought too gentle a ruler for the rude and unsettled population' is an unhistorical statement not supported by primary evidence. As a matter of fact, in due course of time Dewan Moti Ram gave up the idea of leaving the Lahore kingdom for good as he previously thought on account of a domestic problem, and the Maharaja requiring the services of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa for a more strenuous and urgent assignment of the administration of Hazara to harness the

turbulent inhabitants breeding hatred for the Sikh domination, removed him from the governorship of Kashmir and appointed Moti Ram instead. Secondly, if we turn to the other side of the picture, the administration of the Nalwa Sardar cannot be blamed. After all, the inhabitants of this province, unlike those of Lahore and Multan, were turbulent and habitual law-breakers and it stands to reason that to deal with them effectively, the Nalwa Sardar resorted to stern practices. The temperament of the people, the bearing of the locality and the local officials played significant role in the administration of the area. It is also evident that Maharaja's dictates relating to the welfare of the people were while a dead letter in the case of outlying provinces, those were implemented in the provinces of Lahore and Multan.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa as Governor of Hazara

It is a matter of surprise to know that the country called Hazara has been known by various names since the times immemorial. This country came to be known as Hazara only when Timur Shah while going back after invading India in A.D. 1399 felt captivated by the green fields of the region and unwilling to leave this tempting strip of land assigned it to his favourite chieftains. Tradition holds it that those chiefs employed in their service one thousand Turkish soldiers for their defence and this region from henceforth came to be known as Hazara. After the lapse of a few centuries these Turks became lethargic on account of leading an idle life without following any actual pursuit. Resultantly, they became the victims of frequent Pathan invasions. It was in A.D. 1752, when Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India that Hazara nominally came under the domination of the Durianies. In A.D. 1818 one Hashmat Khan, a Turk chieftain is said to have murdered a Pathan named Kamal Khan. **Muhammad Khan Taren**, a local chieftain took up the cause of the Pathan and invaded the territory of Hashmat Khan who sought the help of **Makhan Singh**, the governor of Rawalpindi appointed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Lahore governor at Rawalpindi attacked Hazara with a small division of army. He met with some success in subjugating the opponents. He got constructed a fortress at a place named Sarai Saleh. The local chiefs gathered together some force and attacked the newly constructed fortress. Though the Sikhs suffered defeat in the beginning and their General Ram Dayal lost his life in the fight yet they overcame the rebels after receiving reinforcement from Lahore. Hazara was

destined to change the authoritative hands. After capturing the local chieftains, Sardar Amar Singh Majithia was appointed the first Sikh governor but shortly he happened to be killed in 1821 in a skirmish with Sardar Hassan Ali Khan, the Chief of the Kharrals. After the assassination of the Majithia chief, Kanwar Sher Singh and Sardarni Sada Kaur¹⁴ administered the affairs of Hazara for sometime. The courage and dexterity Sadarni Sada Kaur showed in collecting revenue from this frontier strip is worthy of praise.

In early 1822, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was assigned the governorship of Hazara. As a matter of fact, Hazara and the frontier districts were a constant source of trouble and expense to the Maharaja. There is a long and monotonous record of frontier fights.¹⁵ On the eve of taking the charge of Hazara, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa realised that the law and order situation of this region had reached its lowest ebb. People were poor but habitual law breakers. Murders and internecine wars among the tribesmen had made the confusion worse confounded. Although Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa pressed upon the local chieftains and the inhabitants of this strip to present the murderer of Sardar Amar Singh Majithia before him and created peaceful conditions to a certain degree but Muhammad Khan raised the inhabitants of Srikot against the Sikhs who were able to give them a preliminary defeat. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa took certain concrete steps to strengthen his position and one of these was the laying of the foundation of a fort which was named after the eighth Guru of Sikhs as Harkishangarh. He also built a town in its proximity and named it Haripur after his own name. Baron Charles Hugel has given a detailed account of this fort on his visit to this town in A.D. 1833.¹⁶

Half a mile from Kishangarh is Haripur, surrounded by mud walls, which are fast falling to decay; it seems a place of no great importance from without, yet it has a large and densely crowded population and respectable bazar and is the largest town I have seen in Ranjit Singh's territories in this direction. The trees were full of life and the shops glittered with everything to delight an Indian taste.

Sardar Hari Singh also got built some other forts in the area namely the fort of Darband, Dhamdhor etc. to strengthen the position of the fighting Lahore troops. The Fort of Mansehra was got renovated. He got built a temple and a mosque at Haripur for the Hindus and Muslims respectively so that they might live peacefully with confidence in the region with their household affairs settled to their satisfaction. The Sardar also made necessary arrangements for irrigating the land by digging small *nalas* and *mogas*. These measures helped a great deal in making the region fertile and useful for cultivation. It is said that those measures of relief undertaken by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa led to the popularity of the kingdom of Lahore. Roads got built by the Nalwa Sardar went a long way in making an access to the region easy and comfortable.

It may be pointed out here that during the tenure of his office as governor of Hazara, Hari Singh Nalwa side by side providing facilities of every day life to the inhabitants to pacify them also diverted his full attention in quelling the rebellion of the local chieftains who were the deadly enemies of the Sikh rule in their region with trained divisions of Lahore army. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa brought home to them the naked truth that the conquest of a far flung territory and its consolidation being his moral duty towards his mentor, the Maharaja, he would be friendly and calm with those who would co-operate with him in maintaining law and order but the inhabitants who needed nothing else than the destruction of the invaders who were incidentally the Sikhs always opposed them tooth and nail.

Tradition tells us that once the turbulent tribes of Hazara blocked the passage of Nalwa Sardar near Mangli when he was on his way back to Lahore. It is said that the Sardar tried his best to bring the tribesmen of Hazara round and reconciled them but they were bent upon not allowing the division of the Sardar to pass through that passage. It so happened that it began to rain cats and dogs. After the rain stopped the people of Mangli began to press the earth on the roofs of their houses with iron rods; when asked by the Nalwa Sardar the reason of their so doing, it was narrated to him that the earth of that region was known as *Kuttan mitti*; unless it was badly pressed with iron rods it would not settle. It is said that Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa understood the mystery of the people of the place. They would not be brought round unless they ate

the humble pie at the hands of the opponents. Consequently, the Sardar suppressed the rebellious elements in the village and took his way.

We may safely say from the foregoing discussion that Sardar Hari Singh ruled over the people of Hazara strip with consideration with a view to pacify the inhabitants and consolidate the conquests but as the ideology of the ruled differed drastically from the rulers, adoption of stern ways and methods was but natural.

Administration of Peshawar by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa-1834-37

Pages of history stand testimony to the fact that different powers occupying Peshawar have been constantly preferring to change its name so much so that Emperor Akbar, the Great Mughal named it 'Peshawar'. It is traditionally believed that when Emperor Akbar for the first time had a glance of this remarkable city, after passing through the wild strip of land in the frontier on his return journey from Kashmir, called it so (Peshawar) connoting that it was the first which happened to come before his presence. Subsequently, it came to be called Peshawar. It remained tributary to the kingdom of Lahore from A.D. 1823 to A.D. 1834 when it was annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh on 7th May, 1834 and was placed under the care and responsibility of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa as its *hakim*. It remained under the governorship of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa till his demise in the battle of Jamrud in 1837.

After the annexation of Peshawar the first step taken by the Nalwa Sardar was to survey the whole strip of this land for providing defensive against any possible onslaught. He stationed at Peshawar proper with his troops and in a very short time devised certain measures of safety and improvement in the proximity of the city. The first such measure was construction of a series of forts at strategic places. He renovated a few forts like that of Sumergarh as per requirement. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa also arranged to construct a big strong wall around the city of Peshawar for the purpose of providing security. Tradition holds that the Sardar introduced the regional system of extending *rakhi* over the villages administered by him. Villagers were cautioned that they would be held responsible for each and every malpractice exercised around their area of jurisdiction. The administrative measures taken by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa in the frontier province of Peshawar have been detailed by Gulshan Lal Chopra in his prominent work. He writes¹⁷:

Beyond the Indus, owing to the distance from control, the less patient character of the population, the insecurity of property and scarcity of population, the revenue system pressed more lightly on the people...the government share never exceeded one-third, usually averaged one-fourth to one-fifth and

fell even to one-eighth of the crop. For certain crops-cotton, indigo, sugarcane, tobacco and vegetables, money rates were always taken.

The Sardar managed to divide the strip of Peshawar into main divisions and assigned those demarcated units of land on contract. He helped the contractors in the cultivation of land by digging canals, distributaries and sub-distributaries. Wells also came to the rescue of barren land situated at high surface. Cultivation is said to have been considerably improved so much so that the crops of sugarcane and vegetables added taste to the dull and difficult process of farming in this remote area in the absence of proper means and equipment. All this went a long way in pacifying the native population to a greater degree. The abolition of *jazia*, a tax said to have been always paid under humiliating circumstances by the non-believers was heartily welcomed by non-Muslims.

Qadryar has given a very impressive and authentic picture of the administration of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. He seems to suggest that the Sardar was a mild and lenient administrator but totally averse to rebellion.¹⁸ He did never spare the mischief mongers and always brought them to book. Of course, it was an uphill task to put constraint to the lawless and turbulent activities of the unruly Afghans. Qadryar uses the adjectives of mischievous, terrible, naughty, thieves, rascals, rabbles and *be-pir* or *guruless* for the Afghans.¹⁹ He states that Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa called a spade a spade and did not spare the criminals and offenders.²⁰ He administered justice. As a matter of fact, he knew no mercy for the sinner.²¹ Strict and harsh measures adopted by the Nalwa Sardar restrained many a miscreant Afghans from indulging in malpractices so much so that a weak traveller could set on a journey openly with valuables and gold.²² Robbers and thieves ceased their profession. The administrative measures taken by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa made him a terror not only in the strip of land in close proximity to Peshawar but also throughout the Afghan territory. There is a hackneyed impression that the Afghans were so much afraid of the Nalwa Sardar in this tribal land that Afghan mothers frightened their mischievous children by saying *Haria Ragle da* meaning there by that 'Hari Singh is come'.

Captivating words of Qadryar regarding the administrative measures taken by the Nalwa Sardar are given below for the interest and perusal of the readers:²⁴

Alf ā Peshor de vich yāro
 Harī Singh hun rāj kamān lagā
 gazabnāk Afghān jawān pakke
 vichon suī de nakke Langhān lagā
 nāl noke sāngeen mahīn kar ke
 dekho āpnī een manān lagā
 Qādryār dalerī de kam kar ke
 nām apnā roshan karān laga
 Be bahuhut hoeā ohdā bol bālā
 dhol ā mashūrī dā vajiā jī
 badmāsh bepīr shrīr jehrā
 Vaṅg kāg de teer ton bhajiā jī
 Vekh shāh-jorī Harī Singh valī
 yāro chorān ne chorī nuñ tajiā jī²⁵
 Pe pakar ke jakrdā mujramān nuñ
 zarā khof nā dil te liānvda sī
 trakrī tol kcherī vich adil valī
 pher bol ke hukam sunāvnda sī
 dite kaī phāe, kaī kāth lāe
 gunāgār te tars nañ khānvda sī
 Qādryār Peshour dī hadd andar
 dūlā apnā hukam chalānvda sī
 Te tamām dehāt peshor de vich
 Hari Singh dī phirī duhāt yāro
 pāī esī pathānān nuñ nath jis neñ

sonā hath lei ke turdā rāhī yāro
 sārē chor dākū ohthon pare hoe
 zor kise dā chale nan kā ī yāro
 Qādryār Peshour nuñ sodh ke te
 dhartī Kābul dī ān kambāī yārō²⁴

Some historians and writers hold that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was so much pleased on the contribution of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa in subjugating the tribal folk that he allowed him to strike a coin in his own name. Some writers even go to the extent of giving the verdict alleged to be written on the coins issued by Sardar Hari Singh. Albeit, it is surprising to note that inspite of those tall claims, the name of Hari Singh does not appear on the very model of the coins got printed by them on their books.²⁵

It is quite safe to infer that the coins referred to by historians and writers as 'Hari Singhi Coins' though do not bear his name, and adhere to the old tradition of the Khalsa, by representing the names of Gurus-Nanak Dev and Gobind Singh yet they come to be called as such (*Hari Singhi Coins*) because of the simple reasons that they were issued in the mint of Peshawar during the governorship of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. Nevertheless, it is only the year of minting of those coins which connected them with the name of Nalwa Sardar.

It is worth pointing out here that writings from *kissas* and legendry evidence speak volumes on the activities of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa in the N.W.F.P. Books of history, of course, supplement the oral evidence available on the point. Secondary writers like G.L. Chopra add to our evidence on the point. Regarding Nalwa Sardar's administration of Peshawar, he observes, Both of them (Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and General Aitavale) were compelled alike by the turbulence of the lawless tribes and other inhabitants, and by the geographical and political exigencies of the situation, to resort to peculiarly strong judicial and administrative measures.'

Of course, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa struggled hard for bridling the frontier tribes for the most vital aim of sealing the frontier from the foreign onslaughts in which motive he achieved remarkable success. An

anonymous writer is quite right in his observation when he states that possession of Peshawar, except as a step to further acquisitions does not appear to have been advantageous to Ranjit Singh.* It was a drain upon the finances of Lahore, with the additional evil of leading the Sikhs into constant collision with the fierce tribes in the neighbourhood.²⁷

To conclude, Hari Singh Nalwa, notwithstanding the desire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to extend his conquests beyond Attock, persuaded him quite successfully to harness the Afghans and to reach the natural boundries of the Punjab by conquering Peshawar and consolidating this conquest. Extension of suzerainty to the mouth of the passes was not only a political exigency but also prestigious enterprise.

FOOT-NOTES

1. K.K. Khullar, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 48.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
3. Henry T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Patiala (reprint). 1970, p. 102.
4. Moorcroft, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab*, II, London, 1837, p. 293.
5. Henry Lepel Griffin, *Panjab Chiefs*, 1865, pp. 145-53.
6. Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 16.
7. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, III, p. 261.
8. Sayed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1889, p. 421.
9. Henry T. Prinsep, *op. cit.* p. 102.
10. Moorcroft, *op. cit.*, p. 293; Cf. Anonymous, *History of the Punjab: Rise, Progress and Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 67.
11. Cf. Prem Singh Hoti, *Hari Singh Nalwa*, Ludhiana, n.d., pp. 116-17.
12. Henry Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-45.
13. Historians and writers unanimously agree on the issue of the demise of the promising son of Dewam Moti Ram and his decision of leaving the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and retiring to Benares for good. Latif makes the issue vivid when he writes that the Maharaja did not want to part company of the Dewan and called him to Lahore and appointed at his place 'a more soldierly chief in the person of Hari Singh Nalwa, the most dashing soldier in the Sikh army'. Sayed M. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 421.
14. Cf. A.S. Sandhu, *General Hari Singh Nalwa*, New Delhi, 1987, p. 28.
15. Henry Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 209.
16. Baron Charles Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 45
17. Gulshan Lal Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, pp. 17-21.

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18. Qadryar, *Se-Harfian Hari Singh Natwā* (Ed. Ganda Singh), Patiala, 1965, pp. 17-18.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. *Ibid.*
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. *Ibid.*
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. See for instance A.S. Sandhu, *General Hari Singh Natwa*, New Delhi, 1987, p.113. Also see K.K. Khullar, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 225, and Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, Jullundhar, 1976, p. 108.
 26. Anonymous, *History of the Punjab and of the Rise, Progress & Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs*, Patiala (reprint), 1970, p. 133.
 27. *Ibid.*

EPILOGUE

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, a versatile General and Administrator (1791-1837) possessed qualities of head and heart and was undoubtedly the most revered personality in the court of Lahore. Tradition holds it that his herculean and huge figure made some ladies faint in the Shimla *darbar* gallery when he was there in connection with the talk of the Governor General with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Baron Charles Hugel, a contemporary traveller states that his manner and conversation were very frank and affable.¹ His remarkable military achievements and administrative accomplishments have already been traced in the relevant pages. Suffice it is to mention a few more pursuits of his to supplement the aforesaid account.

The Nalwa Sardar's enterprising disposition made him always take the best of his assignment. Right from his charge of the affairs of Gujranwala, his native place to the administrative assignments as incharge of Attock Fort, and Governor of Kashmir, Hazara and Peshawar as well as his contribution in the formidable expeditions led by the Lahore ruler, the Nalwa Sardar showed his extraordinary capability and capacity for undertaking arduous tasks in hand which made him a legendary figure. Shahamat Ali states that before taking over the charge of Gujranwala, the town was not a place of any fame albeit, on taking of its charge by the Nalwa Sardar the city was greatly improved. The Sardar built a high mud wall round the town, also a fort to the north of it, surrounded by a ditch.² Shahamat Ali gives a very captivating picture of the *baradari* of the Sardar in Gujranwala.³ Baron Charles Hugel refers to the Sardar's aesthetic sense and fondness for palaces and gardens. He writes, "The splendour of the rooms in the palace did not excite my admiration nearly so much as the garden, which was the most beautiful and best kept I had seen in India. The trees were loaded with oranges, on the same kind known in China as Mandarin oranges, but much larger...Hari Singh also transported the plane-tree from Kashmir, which seems to flourish exceedingly well in its new locality. An odour almost overwhelming ascended from the jonquils, which were in immense abundance and of an incredibly large size. Nothing, in fact, could be more carefully adorned with lovely flowers and plants of various kinds than this garden, which evidently formed one of the chief delights."⁴

Of course, General Hari Singh Nalwa was a God fearing man, merciful in ordinary life but stern and obstinate in fulfilling his mission. He was a staunch follower of Sikh Gurus having full faith in their doctrines and teachings. Tradition still testifies his fondness for hearing *gurbani* or the compositions of Sikh Gurus. When once sent by the Maharaja with a handsome amount for donating it to Harmandar Sahib, Amritsar, the Sardar was so enchanted on hearing a *ragi* singing *shabads* on the way that he could not help keeping the sum given by the Maharaja for the purpose of charity to the Darbar Sahib, and handed over to him the whole amount. We are not clear how he satisfied the Maharaja at the loss of the said amount and what were its consequences in store for him.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa is often stated to be a fanatic and rigid Sikh. The conquests of Hari Singh are also ascribed to his being a fanatic. Shahamat Ali writes in this connection: "But as he was a very bigotted Sikh, and owed a hearty grudge to the Mussalman race, in the year 1833, accompanied by Kaur Naonihal Singh, he attacked Peshawar, and occupied it without any apparent resistance, while its chief, Sultan Mahmomed Khan retired to Kabul. Since that time peshawar has remained in the possession of the Sikhs."⁵

From our knowledge of the acts of commission and omission of the Nalwa Sardar, we can say with certainty that such like allegations on the Nalwa Sardar are not only baseless and unwarranted but also give a mean twist to historical findings. We know it for certain that Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa while working on different responsible assignments under Maharaja Ranjit Singh engaged a number of Muslims to work under him in different capacities. After all the structure of power adopted by the Maharaja was followed by the *nazims* and Hari Singh Nalwa was not an exception. We see that the Lahore *Kotwal*; and also the incharge of artillery forces of the Maharaja namely Ilahi Bakhsh were Muslims who spent long tenures of office. Moreover, Hari Singh Nalwa had the opportunity of commanding many Muslim companies. Even he had Muslim *jagirdars*. The Maharaja granted handsome *jagirs* say worth eight lacks of rupees—a very huge amount in so far as the statistics of those days were concerned—to the Nalwa Sardar on wide variety of basis namely service *jagirs* *inam jagirs* and *jagirdars* frequently went on changing⁶ and in such a structure of change several Muslims were

kept by him to manage the affairs thereof. Moreover, the Sardar, though was a religious minded man yet was not to the least degree a fanatic.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa is also grossly misunderstood so far his administration of the provinces of Kashmir, Hazara and Peshawar is concerned. In fact his severity is proverbial. Hugel states: "The harshness of Hari Singh Nalwa having made him unpopular and obnoxious to the inhabitants of Kashmir, he had been removed." We know that the Maharaja intentionally despatched Hari Singh as governor to Kashmir and Peshawar to quell disturbances against the Lahore kingdom with a stern hand and Hari Singh Nalwa proved himself worthy of salt. He took offensive only against the rebellious tribes and the innocent were treated with care and caution. Those who obstructed the administrative activities of Lahore ruler were punished. Similarly at Hazara, the Nalwa Sardar took full care of the sentiments of all the religious communities settled over there. While he constructed a Gurdwara for the Sikhs and a fort at Haripur, he got built a mosque for Muslim residents and a temple for the Hindu population. Moreover, we find many opinions of critics in his favour. General Wade wrote to the Governor-General about General Hari Singh Nalwa that he was 'the most able and popular Sikh governors which the Sikhs have had.'

As a part of policy of territorial aggrandisement, Hari Singh Nalwa extended his mentor's conquests to far flung areas and solved the N.W.F. problem for ever and for ever.

FOOT - NOTES

1. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and Punjab*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p.253.
2. Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint) pp.51-52.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Baron Charles Hugel, *op. cit.* p.253.
5. Shahamat Ali. *op. cit.* p.54
6. *Ibid.* Shahamat Ali has given a long list of *jagirs* granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to General Hari Singh Nalwa from time to time.

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